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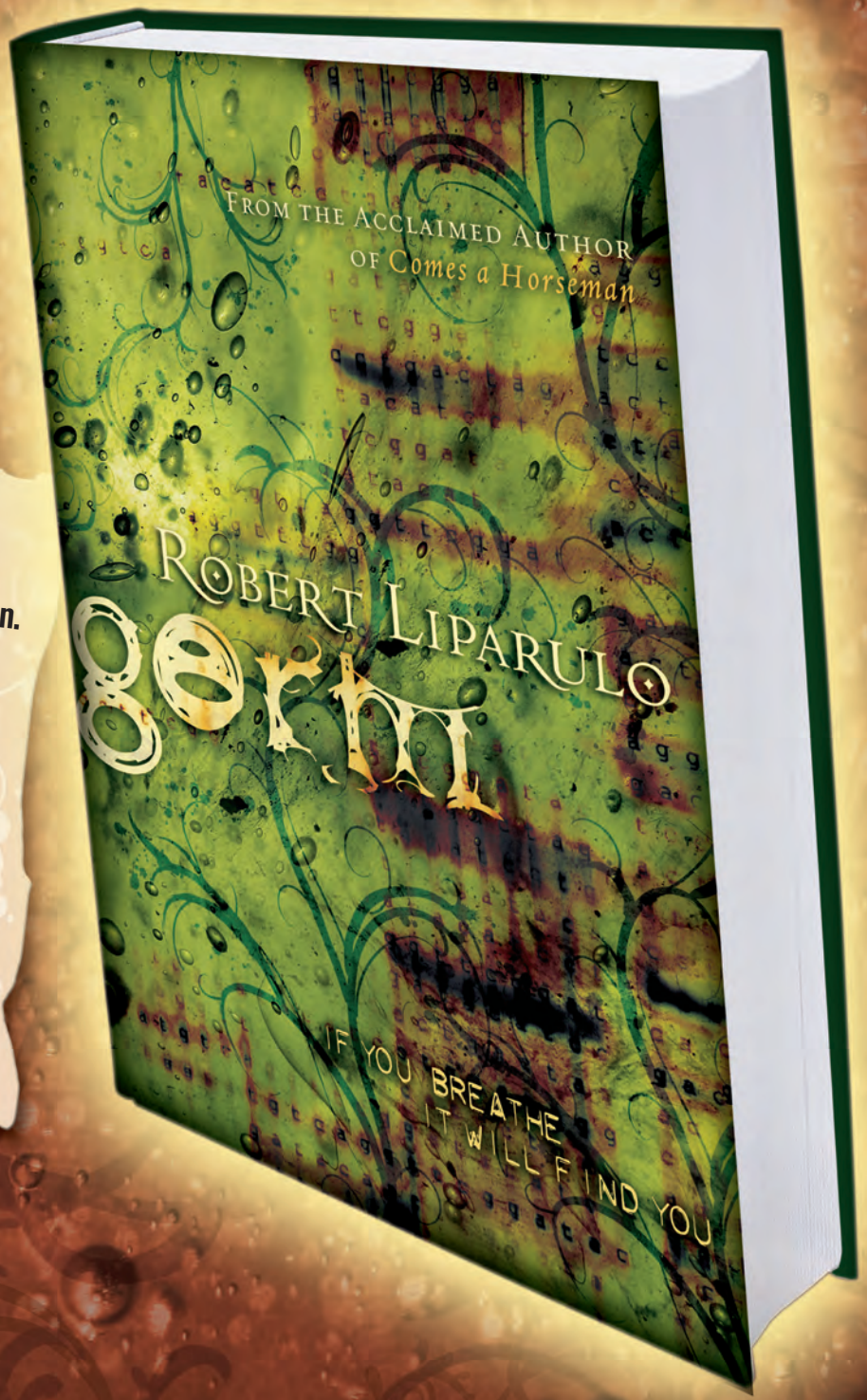

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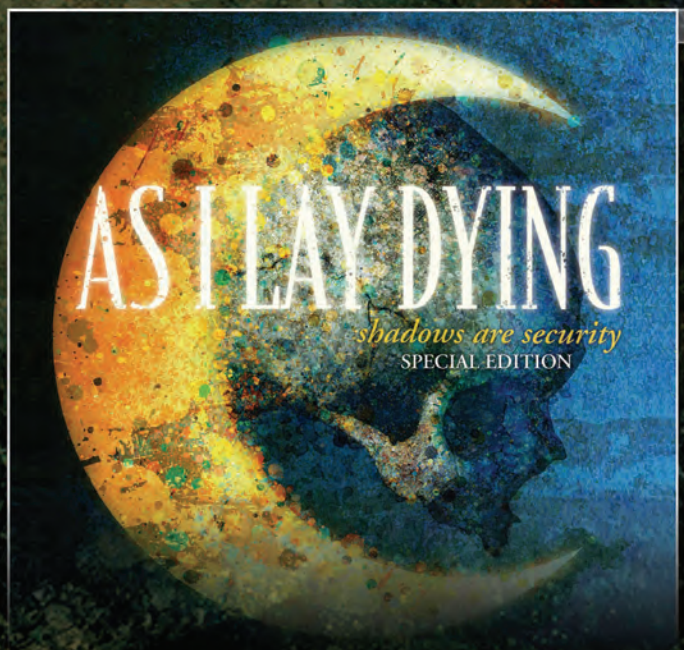

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From the editor

Doug Van Pelt

WE PRESS ON

Have you ever felt like someone was opposing you? I rarely jump to the conclusion that the devil's forces are aligning against me, but check out the drama that happened with this issue: our Evanescence Says story interview was declined due to the band's press schedule being too crowded (probably next issue); our Mute Math feature interview (which we've been working on since March) was declined for the third time due to the band just finishing their lawsuit over being marketed into the CBA market (the publicist felt like it wouldn't be good timing if they granted the very first post-suit interview to HM before the ink was even dry on the decision); our Copeland story/interview request (and poster) was politely declined; our Relient K feature/interview was tough to set up with busy artist schedules, and it was then requested of us to be "bumped" until our next issue, since Capitol Records decided to move their album release date to Feb. 6; the Robert Randolph interview was difficult to schedule, and didn't happen until that last two weeks of deadline; our Wovenhand interview request went unmet until just right before deadline; all of our attempts to interview The Fray have come up empty; The Almost interview was promised but never delivered; and the 12 Guage Valentine interview was late in coming. Whew! Managing one or two "issues" like this in an issue is one thing, but 9 of them?! Wow. I appreciate having this issue done. I hope you do as well.
:?)

SPINNING AT HM NOW

ADIE	*Don't Wait*	Different from Benjamin Gate, but pretty.
KEMPER CRABB	*The Vigil*	Ancient music that resonates deep.
TA-SHMA	*Come Listen*	Cool Jewish reggae-influenced beats.
AMY GRANT	*Time Again: ... Live*	I really enjoyed one good spin of this.
LOVEDRUG	*Pretend You're Alive*	Great melodic rock. These guys are good.
V/A	*Ice Scream*	Intense Finnish metal collection.
IRON MAIDEN	*A Matter Of Life...*	Something's going on with these lyrics!

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HARDNEWS
Quick & concise

UNWED SAILOR
ALBUM ART RULES

Renowned UK visual artist James Marsh was tapped to provide the artwork for the new Unwed Sailor album, *The White Ox*. Marsh's previous album art includes covers for Talk Talk. "I'm into music from many genres," explains Marsh," and like very much the whole ambient sound Johnathon has created on *The White Ox*. It has a lot of depth, gets better the more you play it and is great music for me to work by. I'm proud to be associated with it."

Unwed Sailor will tour the Midwest and Europe this fall, including a stop at the Pygmalion Festival. The band will include Bryce Chambers (Ester Drang), Aaron Hamby (Callupsie), and John Momberg (Koufax).

EMERY
JOEL "CHOPPER" GREEN RIDES OFF

Original bassist, "Chopper" is departing the band. In a statement, Chopper said: "I feel like it's time for me to move on to the next phase in my life. I don't exactly know what I'm going to be getting into, but it'll be rad, for sure. Don't you worry your pretty little heads about me. I hope that the guys can find someone who kicks as much butt as I do to fill my shoes, but I doubt they will. Just kidding! Haha... Actually, I'm serious... Remain the raddest fans on the planet, and support these weirdos, and maybe I'll see ya around." Guitarist/vocalist Devin Shelton will be taking over Chopper's bass duties, changing the band from a sixpiece to a fivepiece. The band have added: "We want to thank our great friend Chopper for being such a big part of Emery. It's because of his hard work, time and effort that this band is what it is today. We'll miss him a whole lot and wish him the best in his next step."

Tim Lambesis starts new label, signs ALES

Tim Lambesis of As I Lay Dying has started his own imprint label, High Impact Recordings. His first signing for the Metal Blade distributed label is **A Love Ends Suicide**, whose debut album, *In The Disaster*, hit the streets in early September. "After being on tour for the past five years, I decided I should start a record label," explains Lambesis, "as I've met so many amazing musicians and I know this is the right way to give exposure to those bands I believe in. I've been given an amazing opportunity and I'll now be teaming up with the same people that have put their hearts behind As I Lay Dying. A Love Ends Suicide is a band that I've wanted to work with for a while." The band is mutually excited about the new relationship: "It's surreal for all of us to be a part of such a label that has innovated and established many of the biggest national acts that we have been greatly influenced by."

News bullets

Relient K and **Emery** are joining Hawthorne Heights and Plain White T's and The Sleeping for the *Nintendo Fusion Tour*, where they (and concert goers) will be able to jam on some cool new Wii titles (like *Excite Truck*, and *Tony Hawk's Downhill Jam*) before they hit retail stores.

Jars of Clay start touring their excellent *Good Monsters* album with **Matt Wertz** and **Leigh Nash** in support. The fall leg of the tour begins October 6 and hits 26 cities. The tour will also help raise awareness of the Blood: Water Mission non-profit organization that Jars of Clay founded.

Hawk Nelson is getting some love on MTVU's *Freshman* program, as well as in the teeny-bopper pub, *Teen Magazine*. The band is headlining their own *Smile, It's The End of the World Tour*. Next they'll hit the road with the team of **Jeremy** and **Adie Camp**. Adie is releasing her solo album after taking a few years off from music (remember **Benjamin Gate**?) getting married and having children.

War Of Ages are going out on tour with Remembering Never and Full Blown Chaos.

Inhale/Exhale's debut album, *The Lost The Sick The Sacred*, hits on November 21. They will precede the release with an October/November tour with **The Chariot**.

As a surprise, 1,000 copies of **Norma Jean**'s *Redeemer* were selected to contain Polaroids snapped by the band themselves during the recording process of the album. The band just returned from Sweden where they shot two new videos with Popcore Films, whose first US video was "Liarsenic" from their previous release, *O' God, The Aftermath*. NJ will be on the *Radio Rebellion Tour* this fall with Between the Buried and Me, Fear Before the March of Flames, and Misery Signals.

Open Grave Records plans a metal Johnny Cash tribute album.

Action Reaction

BY KELLY BENSON

"I think we fall somewhere between ABBA and Cannibal Corpse. And we just want smiles."

Yeah, that sounds about right. Comprised of Jason Gleason (former frontman of Further Seems Forever), Chrissy "Bella" Gleason and Salvatore Ciarevino (former Element 101 members), Action Reaction will have you practicing your *That Thing You Do* claps while contemplating your place in the world. The name comes from Jason's theory that, "We live in a technological environment where everyone is so well connected, but at the same time more distant than ever from being face to face. We forget that our actions have bearing on other people and the earth... that's the reaction."

Slowly birthed from years of comradery, Jason explains, "We all met on a tour we did together when I was in Further Seems Forever and they were in Element 101. We've been great friends ever since. As for Bella and I, we have been married for almost three years. Can't stop love." While working blue-collar jobs, the friends began to write music in their spare time. Living under the same roof provided the kind of environment to allow that music to fester and grow. "It was so satisfying to just create without an agenda or boundaries; ideas would just flow freely."

While ideas flowed free, recording did not, as their debut album, *3 Is The Magic Number*, began early in 2004 and didn't finish until March of this year. "It's been almost a three year project. Spending all this time together has brought us so close that writing songs together has become second nature," Jason admits.

No strangers to the music world, these three amigos took what they learned from their former bands and made something original. "We all have very different backgrounds in rock, classical, and funk and have been really getting into reggae and soul lately. Every band hopes to do something unique and move beyond what has been done in the past. Hopefully our music is part of this evolution and people can and will identify with it." When asked how past lessons were applied to this current project, Jason said, "I knew I wanted to make music that was joyous. From the writing process to the finished product and everything in between. I had a hard time finding that joy toward the end of my time in Further Seems Forever. This band is founded on friendship, love, and respect."

New Method signed a deal with Devan Cyka's label D'ville/Warner Brothers in May and have been recording all summer. "It's a bit more like our Blame Lucy material used to be," explains vocalist **Doug Meacham**, "more fun/power pop/rock."

Hundred Year Storm have placed their excellent new (Jeffrey Travis produced) video, "Yesterday We Had It All" on their myspace page.

Robert Randolph & The Family Band provided the theme music for the *Saturday Night Football* telecast on ABC. They taped a performance of their new song, "Thrill Of It," from the rooftop of the Pontiac Garage in New York City's Times Square. The band will headline their own tour starting in Nashville on October 25 and ending in New York City on November 17.

Jonezetta, who release their debut, *Popularity*, on October 3, are hitting the road for two months with **Mute Math** and Shiny Toy Guns. Jonezetta just shot a video in Los Angeles for their "Get Ready (Hot Machete)" single. Award winning director Shane Drake helmed the vid, which was shot in a ski lodge circa the 70s and depicts an ensemble of characters trapped in time celebrating. The band recently shared its goals for world-wide domination: "We want to be the first band to sell a billion records," laughs vocalist **Robert Chisolm**. "We want to play every continent in the world. And then, we want to meet Prince."

P.O.D. is already back in the studio, recording a new song with producer **Travis Wyrick** for a best-of album for Rhino Records: *Greatest Hits – The Atlantic Years*. The new song will also be mixed by Chris Lord-Alge. Another track will be a never-before-released song from the Glen Ballard *Testify* sessions. Look for the album on November 21. P.O.D. has left Atlantic Records, and it'll be interesting to see if they go the DIY route or sign to another label. The band sets its eyes on continuing to write for a possible spring release.

HARDNEWS
Page twelve

Demise Of Eros

The title to your new album, *Neither Storm, Nor Quake, Nor Fire,* has a tough mentality to it. Why adopt that title? What does it mean to you?
Darren: Well, it definitely has that tough mentality to it, which could suggest perseverance amidst opposition. And that's great if it suggests that to someone. But that's the great thing about using imagery in lyrics and story: it can suggest one thing to one person and something else to another. When I wrote the lyrics for this song I had in mind a story about Elijah the prophet, who was on top of a mountain with plans of meeting God. All these things happened around him – storm, quake, and fire – but God wasn't in any of them. Instead, after all that, God speaks in a whisper. He was still among all the chaos.

What do you think it means that God has our name engraved on His palms? What are the practical implications of that (song title)?
One practical application that comes to mind is that if He has our names engraved, then He must know our names. To me, that implies that He doesn't look down upon humanity and see us merely as a crowd. In fact, He isn't "looking down" at all; He's nearer to us than any other. He knows and views us intimately as individuals.

What keeps a person doubting? What is the remedy for doubt for a believer? Where does community play a role in a person's faith? (especially a young person...)
Dietrich Bonhoeffer had a good maxim regarding this question. "He who obeys believes, and he who believes obeys." That is, you cannot believe the promises of God (for they are huge and sometimes strange and must be accepted on faith) if you are not obeying what you know to obey. It will be impossible for you. If you find yourself doubting the big picture or even some of the more complex parts of it, obey the simple things that you know to be right. The rest will come right presently. Also, keeping in mind the fact that everyone doubts at some point is important, too. Actually, if you find yourself doubting it can be a good thing – it could mean that you are wrestling with some important questions. Regarding the role of community – it's as important as anything else, maybe more. I've heard the story of a pastor talking to a man who was convinced he could follow Jesus on his own. The man cited all his reasons for not being involved in a community, while the pastor patiently listened. Then the pastor went to the fireplace and removed an ember from among all the others. He then sat silently and watched the individual ember rapidly cool, while all the others stayed bright and hot. The man came back to the community the next week. For young people especially, I think it is important to seek out intergenerational community. People your own age can only see the world so differently from you. We all need the wisdom of those who have gone before us.

News bullets

Kutless is hitting the road with **Disciple**, **Red**, and **Run Kid Run**. The tour is being sponsored by Suzuki, who will be giving away an SX4 and two motorcycles.

Disciple will be headlining their own *Still Rising Tour* before the dates with Kutless starts. These shows will also include Red and **Grand Prize**.

Delirious? Has recorded a live CD/DVD combo, *Now Is The Time: Live At Willow Creek*. In addition to the music and video, there's a 30-minute documentary on the story of Delirious?, an 8-minute "behind the scenes" featurette and the director's audio cut.

Falling Up vocalist **Jessy Ribordy** has been recording video podcasts on their management's website [paradigmmgmt.com]

When **Underoath** suddenly announced they were leaving the *Vans Warped Tour* two weeks before the trek's conclusion, the fate of the band looked uncertain and in fact bleak. Dramatic internal struggles were taking place while an *Alternative Press* magazine writer was on the road with the band, and it's documented in the Underoath cover story in the October 2006 issue. Now, after taking a brief hiatus to resolve the issues that were threatening the band's existence, Underoath have emerged stronger and more cohesive as a unit than ever before. "We're sorry we had to drop off tour in the Northeast," notes guitarist **Tim McTague**. "Our situation was critical and we had to work through old issues that were hindering us from functioning as a band together. We're excited to be back on the road and we'll definitely come back to the Northeast in the spring to make things up to our fans." The band returns to the road at press time for a Canadian headlining tour with Silverstein, Moneen, and **He Is Legend**. Next, the group heads overseas for the *Taste of Chaos* international tour with Taking Back Sunday, Thursday and others.

LIVE REPORT

Purple Door Festival

BY DOUG VAN PELT

SKI ROUNDTOP, PA – The Purple Door Festival manages to compact several fabulous shows into one and a half days on the grounds of a small ski resort in Eastern Pennsylvania. I think the short length of it is refreshing for all those involved – from the vendors manning booths, to the bands and the fans – not to mention the grade-A porta-potties with hand washing basins complete with anti-biotic lotion.

The evening of Friday, August 18 packed 10 bands on two stages. **The Tapes** really stood out on the Gallery Stage, with cool, melodic songs that pleased the ears with memorable moments. **Joy Electric** sounded great on the same stage later that night, hammering out full-bodied songs with his minimalist setup. **Lovedrug** was probably the first great rock performance of the festival, making this reporter realize, 'I've got to listen to more of this band.' They handled the mainstage like it was no big deal, utilizing the large space and grabbing the crowd with its cache of hooks. Labelmates **Copeland** took over next and quickly filled the outdoor expanse with their lush, beautiful sounds. **Aaron Marsh** proved more than an ample frontman, all the while showcasing his fantastic vocals, and sharing a couple new songs. **Emery** closed out Friday night with a fantastic, energetic set that had the crowd singing and screaming along. Near the end of the set, the following challenge was issued from the stage: "...I've been thinking about Jesus and the crucifixion and how He was human. How many of you know at least 12 people over the age of 60 and visit them on a regular basis? And how many people do you visit on myspace on a regular basis?"

While the **Witalla Brothers** and **Bradley Hathaway** got an early start Saturday morning on the Gallery Stage, **Transition** got things going first on the HM Magazine Stage with plenty of energetic melodic punk. **Last Tuesday** followed with lots of fun and goofing around between songs. **August Burns Red** threw the first lethal metal punch of the weekend, with their tenacious guitar attack. **Showbread** was much anticipated, and they kept the crowd going with non-stop jamming and even their between-song banter (featuring more than their fair share of "fer-sho" affirmations) was all up-tempo. **Norma Jean** came on stage with mud painted faces and stood in front of some beat-to-smithereans speaker cabinets and unleashed the tight and heavy fury that whipped the pit into a frenzy, which included a guy with a pair of angel wings on his back, which gave the flurry of arms and legs an ironic twist. **The Lonely Hearts**, **Anathallo**, **Saxon Shore**, and **Cool Hand Luke** all gave heartfelt performances back on the Gallery stage, where **The Choir** topped things off with a wonderful, ethereal if not sentimental set of great songs from their catalog. It was great seeing **Matt Slocum** up there supporting the band on bass. **The Showdown** tore things up on the small Warehouse 54 Stage, throwing groove after metallic groove at the audience like a torturer to his victims. **The Myriad** conjured many an atmospheric sound on the last night of the Main Stage, utilizing violin bows, piano, and soft vocals to great effect. **mewithoutYou** were joined on Main Stage by members of **Psalters**, dancers, and even a giant harp. I'd hate to have been **TFK** and **Relient K**, having to follow that, but they did just fine, coaxing the last drops of energy from the loud and appreciative crowd.

Photos from top: Joshua Cornutt of August Burns Red; Showbread's Josh Dies; mewithoutYou's Christopher Kleinberg; Norma Jean's Chris Day; and the pit angel (All photos by Doug Van Pelt)

WOVEN HAND

BY JAMIE LEE RAKE

What's the likelihood that any other veteran of the general market indieground with the tenure in it that Woven Hand's David Eugene Edwards has would make a statement like:

"I sing about the same things in every song." ???

He followed up that admission by saying, "Hopefully they're in a new and creative way," and with *Mosaic* (Sounds Familyre) as the latest evidence, Edwards isn't lying. The plain spoken manner by which the erstwhile leader of 16 Horsepower – that square peg of a band situated between the round holes of Americana, alt rock and European/Middle Eastern worldbeat – reflects his personal humility and spiritual-musical compulsion.

"The only reason I make music is to talk about Christ and what He's done for me...I can't do anything else," Edwards confesses. He later quotes a 16 Hp near-hit, "Black Soul Choir," when he says that his musical mission is to convince listeners that "every man is evil, every man's a liar," and their need for the Lord's salvation.

The urgency of Woven Hand's message precedes the catholocity of Edwards' tastes. All those tuneful, mostly minor key tunes come both from steady inspirations, like '70s Bob Dylan ("John Wesley Harding is probably my favorite album") and early solo Brian Eno, and current obsessions. Among the latter are current Estonian classical composer Arvo Paart and the music of medieval Europe. Even the most cursory listen to *Mosaic* betrays Edwards' immersion in Native American vocal music and scads more sounds. As for where his influences turn up, Edwards sensibly offers, "They just come out in the music at different times."

His current album's title references the earthly author of the Pentateuch who led the Israelis out of Egypt, but it may also as aptly apply to the approach Edwards has taken from 16 Hp and followed into his current flexible one-man-band-plus act. "To me, the music continues," he muses, citing that he still plays with former Horsepowerman Pascal Humbert. Conversely, "What I like about Woven Hand is it's not one particular thing. It changes all the time," Edwards says of his ability to perform solo shows or go beyond 16 Hp's trio format for its line-up. "We've (toured with) up to six people."

Another continuation from the days of 16 Hp to Woven Hand is that Edwards' music continues to be more popular on the Continent than in the Colonies. "I'm probably in Europe five or six months of the year," states the sonic auteur whose three-weeks-touring-at-a-time schedule nevertheless likely affords him more time with his wife and two kids than most guys with a nine-to-five.

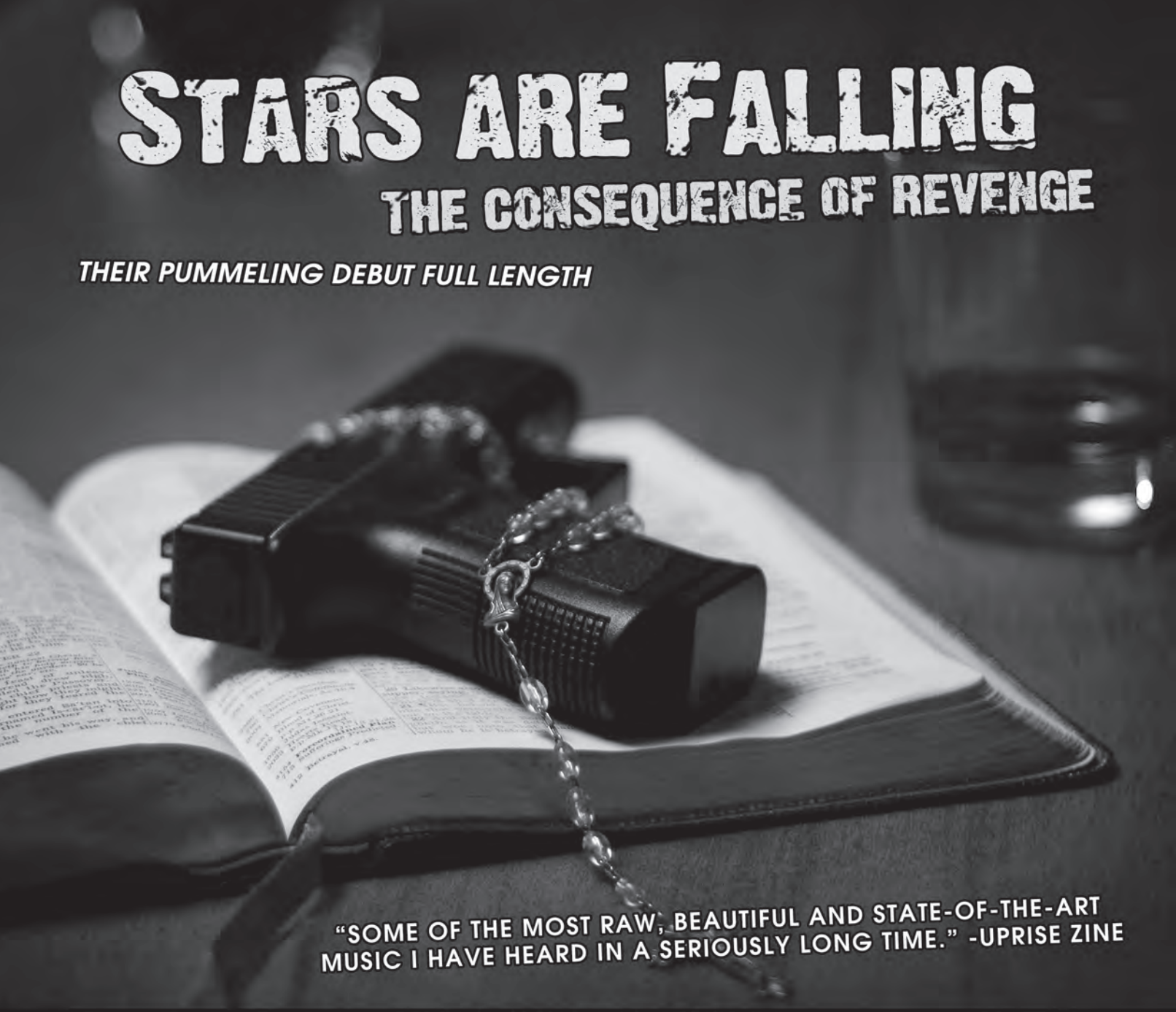
And though English may be the lingua franca of much international business, "there's definitely a language barrier" in many of the countries the Hand plays. "There's a lot of people who come just because they like the music," but after some decipher the lyrics, they get Edwards' evangelistic intentions.

With a gratitude born of assurance in his life's work, Edwards offers, "I'm just happy to be able to keep doing it."

He's not the only one.

wovenhand.net

Taking Jesus seriously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CRIMSON MOONLIGHT

BY ED HELLIG

"Can you keep us in your prayers? Today has been a very stressful day."

The strange request only seems so because of the place at which it was uttered – The Skelletones Club, in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Adding to the oddity of the moment, the person who made the request is donning a leather Viking mask, a medieval sword and is completely covered in blood. Yet, Crimson Moonlight's vocalist Pilgrim seems genuine and pious, even excessively humble for a man who is about to prowl the stage with the ferocity of a wolf seeking the wanton audience he is about to slaughter. The band is on their third-to-last stop in their first excursion into the American wilderness; that is, the American Midwest. At the invitation of fellow metalheads Becoming the Archetype, Crimson Moonlight took advantage of an invitation to play Cornerstone 2006 and extended their stay a few days to brave the summer heat and treat us all with a high dose of good ol' Swedish black metal.

And the band leaves a joyful rampage in their wake. Blasting through a set that encompasses most of their CDs, including a heavier, infinitely more brutal version of "Eternal Emperor, "the hour-long set is filled with an energy that is beyond comprehension. As an extra treat, the band has released a new EP especially for this American tour, *In Depths of Dreams Unconscious*, and included in their set two of the EP's strongest songs, "The Shiver of Fear" and "The Advent of the Grim Hour," which sounds annihilating – a death/black onslaught comparable to fellow Swedes Dissection. The audience is comprised mostly of metalcore kids, who witnesses each chord and blastbeat, each voracious and bombastic tune in awe, jaws ajar. Pilgrim himself seems aware of the impact the band's music makes in their fans: "On this tour especially…it's been awesome to see a lot of people saying our lyrics have touched them and they're glad that we're writing about life's struggles. They're really thankful for that. And when people come to us and say they can truly feel the Spirit of God in our music and during our shows…I don't know what else to say, other than that's what this band is all about and I think it's one of the best compliments we can hope for. Of course, it's great when people say we make great music…but when people say they can feel God in our music, for me personally it's awesome."

The best was yet to come. Living in the Midwest has finally paid off, for I am able to attend not only the Grand Rapids show, but the Warsaw, Indiana show as well. Arriving at the venue a full three hours prior to the beginning of Aletheian's set (the first of the three main acts in this tour) meant extra time to hang out with the bands and the metal brotherhood in attendance. Already upon arrival, we get a glimpse at how special the evening is about to become: we see the unmistakable Pilgrim, a few hundred yards away, walking slowly into the woods to pray. There is a palpable, definite spiritual charge in the air: from the encouragement we receive from the bands, to a most surprising meeting with Pr. Miguel Angel (of Exousia and Alcance Subterraneo Ministries fame), and even a pre-show prayer with Pilgrim just as he finishes vocal warm-ups chanting what it sounded like Viking songs, we are transported in our minds to years ago, when Christian metal in its infancy had yet to have the naiveté of the scene corrupted of its innocence. It may sound exceedingly profound, but the music almost seemed secondary to the event itself. Surely, Crimson Moonlight once again delivered a behemoth of a set, even more brutal and razor-sharp; but for many of us, including Crimson Moonlight themselves, the evening had evolved in something beyond black metal, beyond music. If Grand Rapids had provided an event that was singularly intense in the musical aspect, Warsaw had just upped the ante. As a friend pointed out, the Grand Rapids show was a concert. This was an experience.

"I felt a powerful spiritual presence onstage tonight. God was in accord with what happened here," said Pilgrim, trying to recoup from their set, enshrouded in grime and grandeur.

What else was left to say, other than amen?

crimsonmoonlight.com/cm

What is God saying to us?

RETROACTIVE RECORDS

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12 GAUGE VALENTINE

BY RAND RENFROW

I am not going to claim that I can growl or scream, and probably no matter how I try I could never emulate the vocals of Jon Green. I am also not going to claim, unless you asked me in public, that I could play a musical instrument. But I still do have things in common with the band Twelve Gauge Valentine: we were both in Hollywood at the same time and both got to stay in some sweet pads.

So what does all this mean, you ask? Well, while both Twelve Gauge Valentine and I were both in California at the same time, it was for two very different reasons. I was there for a film festival, but TGV was there doing what has been their jobs for almost two years now: being a full-time time band, recording an album. That is right, the recent Solid State signees were holed-up in an apartment for a month on the Sunset strip, in and out of studios, recording their debut full length: *Shock Value*. Since I didn't run into the band over there, I caught up with vocalist Jon Green later.

Twelve Gauge Valentine the band has been around for about four years, but has only been a full-time band for two years, bringing their brutal breed of hardcore and metal to all parts of the country. And just because you may not have heard of them, doesn't mean they haven't existed. They have already released an EP on Sound Vs. Silence, and now, Green tells me, just had a great time recording their new record. "Well, my favorite [part] I guess was just the environment we were in. I mean, the label really put us up in an amazing apartment right on the Sunset strip, pretty much in Hollywood. An amazing apartment, you know, for a little over a month and, uhh, we recorded with some really nice people who were good, so that was a whole new experience. So … I guess the worst, most annoying part was trying to find parking for our trailer, 'cause in Hollywood it is practically impossible."

That is why I took the bus around. While they might not be too good at parking, the band certainly isn't lacking in the connections department. You know what I am talking about: all the people they know that get them many benefits that us normal people don't. "Well, as far as production, I mean [we had] Fred Archambault, who has worked on some really big records. He is kind of like a celebrity." Green told me. "He's worked on 18 Vision records and the Avenged Sevenfold record and stuff like that, so he was pretty well experienced and well rounded. He had a lot of connections we could pull, so we got to go into some really, really nice studios … As far as mixing goes… Scrap 60 Productions actually mixed the record and made it sound amazing. And to my knowledge it is one of the guitar players of Anthrax. That's one of the members at least, so that is pretty surreal." On top of all that, the way TGV got signed to Solid State is a tangled web of touring and being friends with The Chariot, As Cities Burn, and getting manager Ryan Rado, who has managed As Cities Burn and Jonezetta, both on Tooth and Nail.

When asked Jon if he could go back in time and change one thing in the band's history, he said, "We didn't really plan going completely full throttle with the band, so when the name came about, it was the most cliché thing we could think of. Changing that would be good."

I am sure you can agree: they have been doing pretty dang well for a group who doesn't like their name.

twelvegaugevalentine.com

If we could change our name...

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He Is Legend

SANE IN THE MEMBRANE

BY ANDREW SCHWAB

IT'S AMAZING TO ME THAT MY FRIEND SCHUYLER DANE IS STILL SANE. OR IS HE? AFTER ALL, SANITY IS THE FIRST THING YOU WAVE GOODBYE TO WHEN YOU CLOSE THE DOUBLE DOORS ON A FIFTEEN PASSENGER VAN AND LEAVE TOWN FOR THE THRILL OF VICTORY (AGONY OF DEFEAT) THAT IS FOUR LETTERS, ONE SYLLABLE: T-O-U-R. ITS GLAMORIZED MYTHOS IS AS WIDELY ACCEPTED BY THOSE WHO HAVE NOT INDULGED ITS INSANITY AS ITS INSANITY IS WIDELY WARNED OF BY THOSE WHO HAVE. READ THAT LAST SENTENCE AGAIN. IF YOU HAVE EVER BEEN ON THE ROAD AS A FULL-TIME TOURING BAND YOU HAVE TO BE SOMEWHAT OUT OF YOUR MIND.

In support of their last album, *I Am Hollywood*, He Is Legend stayed on the road for basically twenty-four months straight, hitting Europe as well as the states, touring in everything from Ryder trucks to dilapidated conversion vans. They shared the stage with everyone from Atreyu to Story of the Year to Eighteen Visions to Norma Jean. And as a debut artist, they sold 40,000 copies. Not bad at all. But touring for that long is *Far Beyond Driven* (yes, the Pantera reference was intentional) – it's bordering on suicidal. The human mind can only stand so many truckstops and showerless jaunts and the smell – oh, the smell – of five dudes trapped in a rolling closet space. Still, despite loss of brain cells and the jarring loose of a few screws, the band has still become one of the most entertaining and unpredictable live units around.

He Is Legend is now preparing to bless us all with the long overdue sophomore effort *Suck Out The Poison*, which I can tell you firsthand is going to raise more than a few eyebrows. If nothing else, this new record abounds with courage if not sheer audacity. I hear as much Sevendust, Rob Zombie, and Sevendust as I do anything else. Not exactly "scene." And not that HIL cares much about catering to this scene or that scene. Because they don't. And I admire that. However, I will warn you: this record is not for the faint of heart. It's venomous and abrasive musically. The lyrics are shadowy, if not downright pitch-black at times. It's not a spiritual record, directly at least. The band isn't even releasing the record in the Christian market. All of the above seemed like good reasons for me to have a conversation with him, to maybe find a link between dark fairy tales and the reality of life as a touring band:

Schwab: I just finished listening to the new record, and I must say this is a little different from your last effort. Your sound has changed quite a bit...
Schuyler: Definitely. We wanted to pull more from the influences that we share, the bands that made us want to start playing in first place. Pantera, Zombie, Sevendust, Nirvana, 70's rock, etc. We aren't trying to sound like the 7,000,000 other Story of the Year's out there. This is nu-metal meets southern rock. We hate everything that confines you to the scene. We are just going to do what we want musically.

Schwab: The bands that stick around are the ones that carve their own paths. So, do you want to tell me (and everyone who is reading) a little about the meanings behind the lyrics? I mean, I can infer quite a bit there, but it seems like you have left the beaten path so to speak with your words. Why so cryptic?
Schuyler: This is a fierce and brutal record sonically and vocally. But lyrically, I wanted to take the fairy tale existence my band and I have lived on the road and put it into fairy tales on the record. Each song is a story. The overriding theme deals with loss...and how loss can affect you. Even though many of the songs are in the first person, it's usually a character speaking and not me. I am basically just a narrator on the album as many of these stories play themselves out. It's dark, but it's also real, in a sense. Even though these are fictitious stories they are based on events that have taken place around me.

Schwab: You have to know that some of this material is going to offend people. How do you feel about that?
Schuyler: When I was growing up I was in the Bible belt, and people were very closed minded about so many things. Now that I am out on my own I guess I am subconsciously rebelling against that somehow. I am a Christian, but I am not conservative. These songs may rub some people the wrong way, and I think that's ok. We don't want to alienate anyone from our music, but we also have to write from the place that we are at. I am sure I will be at a different place in the future, but as of right now we love playing the music that we are playing, and I love acting out these new songs on stage with my band members. After being on the road so long and losing touch with so many friends and family, this is what comes out.

Schwab: Is there a sense of hope at all on the record?
Schuyler. Ultimately, yes. But it's not obvious. Sometimes, when you are in the moment, all you can see is what's in front of you. When I write about a widow losing her husband at sea or an evil Frankenstein wife rebelling against her husband it's just a reflection on things I see around me.

Schwab: And why the album title?
Schuyler: The act of saving someone else through a vile act is very intriguing to me.

Schwab: I have seen the live show grow over the past few years, and I think you guys have one of the best shows around. How do you think the show has evolved into what it is now?
Schuyler: We have just embraced the fact that we are one of the most random bands around. You

continued on page 47

The Real Sting

AN INTERVIEW WITH STEVE BOKDEN

Like it or not, professional wrestling is huge. And anyone who's into the spectacle knows who this guy named Sting is. Heck, he's received the title WCW World Heavyweight Championship six times. But not everyone knows that he is a Christian and bows his knees to a man named Jesus.

I presume a little bit from what I know of your DVD release so let me just jump right in and say, how did you fall in love with the lover of your soul, Jesus the Christ?

Well, I had my moment of truth in August of 1998 when I was confronted by my wife and she had asked me some point blank questions about my life as a pro-wrestler on the road with all the . . . you know, fame and fortune. And the Holy Spirit must've been just barely alive in me, because that particular day I could no longer lie to my wife. I confessed my whole lifestyle to my wife and that's what really did it for me. My brother who is now my pastor, he remembers both of us accepting the Lord as young kids. So I know I did that and I think that, you know, the Holy Spirit must have been alive in me just enough that, you know, I lied and I was a chameleon for so many years and I finally got to the point where I just couldn't hold it in anymore. I turned to pain medication and muscle relaxers and drinking alcohol just to escape and just to get a good night's sleep and really it wasn't a good night's sleep. Really, I had so many skeletons in the closet – so many secrets so many, you know, bad choices that I'd made, so many consequences that I was dealing with I – I couldn't hardly sleep at night. I tried to quit so many times and could not do it. I accepted Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior and no longer paid Him lip service, but I surrendered my life completely to him in August of 1998 and I had a complete transformation. The language out of my mouth changed, my lifestyle obviously changed. Pills and alcohol stopped immediately – cold turkey. Everything completely stopped and something supernatural happened to me. I'm absolutely convinced of it. So, that was it for me.

Cool. What's the last eight years been like?

It's been phenomenal. God has, you know, not only restored my life… I've been reconciled to Him, but He reconciled my marriage. And my wife got saved, probably one or two months after I did in that same year of 1998 and we … I just built the bridge of trust one brick at a time. It took a long time to build it back between my wife and I, but by God's grace He reconciled my marriage and He gave us a new baby and she's six now. We have two boys, 15, 14 and then Gracie my daughter, is 6; and we are teaching our children the way of the Lord. They are really involved in the youth program at church, they're in Christian schools. They know the Word of God. They've been taught that. We're all involved in our church. We're watching our family grow and blossom in a good and positive way. Whereas, the deception before is that you think you're a good parent, but man, what an eye opener! The scales were pulled back in August of '98 and I have a much better picture of what a good dad and a good husband really is.

A lot of times, uh, the world you live in seems to be kind of a tough guy rules kinda world; but sometimes a believer in Christ is gonna be somebody who's on his knees and crying tears of joy and repentance and whatnot. How do you reconcile the tough guy image with the

image of somebody who is broken?
You know, with me it was no problem at all, because the transformation was so strong. Again, I knew there wasn't a drug or woman or a doctor or psychologist, a big pay per view, a big pay check, no amount of money…there was nothing that was going to be able to fix me – and I knew it. I knew I needed something supernatural; and when I surrendered my life completely to Jesus Christ and said, "I need your help. Please God, come help me. Save my life. I give my life to You. From this day forward I will live for You…" It was at that moment that God finally had somebody He could work with and the transformation was so strong and the scales were … I was so blind that, by the time, I could see. "The truth will set you free." That simple Scripture there – that we've heard our whole lives, but it never really meant anything until suddenly one day it meant something and I understood it, that the transformation was easy for me. When somebody saves your life and you know it, you're more likely to be a walking billboard for Jesus Christ. And, in my case, my brother – who, again, is my pastor – said, "You're going to want to share this with everyone around you." And I said, "What does that mean?" He said, "That means everyone you work with, everyone you see… That doesn't mean you cram it down their throats, but at the same time they gotta know what has happened in your life." So, from Hulk Hogan to Bill Goldberg and the biggest names in wrestling, I've talked to every single one of those guys and either in groups of three or two or even just one on one, but they all know who I am and what I stand for. And because I was outspoken about that, it made it easier for me. They saw a guy who was completely humble and admitting that I had all these faults and admitting that I was a loser dad and a loser husband and: "I don't care what it takes, but I want to be reconciled to my wife again and I want my family to be restored and I'm not going to back down to the peer pressure or the," you know, "man's man image any longer." The chameleon in me is gone. The only hat I wear is the one that says, "Steve Borden." That's what I am, take it or leave it. So, I don't know… I hope that kinda answers your question. I guess it was just easy for me, because He literally just saved my life and then I was outspoken about that. I was strengthened by that. You know, the more you talk about it, the stronger you get. That's one of the problems I see with so many Christian people in the church, you know? You'd never know that they were Christians, you know? They don't ever talk about it.

Alright. And what helped germinate the name Sting for ya?
You know, actually it was Stinger in the beginning and fans just called me Sting. And the amazing thing is, I own the name. It's a trademarked name and likeness that I've had for 15 years now. Sting the singer was in concert in Atlanta, Georgia in an outdoor venue and he called me and wanted me to come to his concert, because he said, "My nine-year-old son has this poster on his bedroom wall and I wanted to meet this guy that calls himself The Sting. So he brought me up on stage, put a guitar around my neck and he was really, really good to me. The day I met him I thought, 'I wonder if he knows that I've trademarked this name?' You know? And the thing is: I was a wrestler and he was a singer, but these days we're both considered entertainers, so it's a really weird deal, but… Anyway.

Did you play any chords or notes on the guitar?
No, I said something stupid like, you know, "I'd like to thank you on behalf of the band and thanks for the audition," or something like that. I don't know what I said. Some old Beatles line.

✖

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Album reviews

25 ALBUMS 32 INDEPENDENT ARTISTS

NORMA JEAN

REDEEMER

Norma Jean excels in giving the kids what they want to hear, and on their latest effort, they make no qualms about it. Though the band generally wore their influences on their sleeve in the past, Redeemer (thanks to vocal evolution by frontman Corey Brandon and some slick production by the renown Ross Robinson) makes a somewhat fresh impression on what is fast-becoming a dead genre.

Crushing? Of course. If Norma Jean excels at something, it is in creating a devastating impact of sharp-edged dissonance. This album is no exception. And it is not just heavy, but unsettling. *Redeemer* is more like a psychological thriller than a horror film, and you get the feeling that, although there is a happy ending, the majority of the cast still lie slain (or at least critically injured). Case in point: Brandon spews buckshot in the tense, terse track three ("A Small Spark vs. A Great Fire"): "Rip this tongue out by the root ... an open grave from which a great forest will rise ... the corpses I've made ... Oh, how we curse, the tongue is a flame. Let there be grace."

Unpredictable? Not necessarily. Botch and Mastodon fans will find some comfort in most of these tracks, like the dense and mortifying "The End of All things Will Be Televised." Yet, fans of the Underoath school of commercialized metalcore may find some moments here to attach themselves to as well. Consider track two, "Blueprints For Future Homes," during which Brandon belts his full range of animosity, from wail to melodic yelp. And do I almost hear a hook in there? Be careful guys, or you might just be labeled "accessible."

Diverse? Yes. There are more singing moments, for certain. The brutality is more focused, and the band gives you a break here and there, lending the record to greater dynamics than anything they have done before. The production leans less toward sludge and more towards ➡

Rating system

05 *CLASSIC*
04 *FABULOUS*
03 *SOLID*
02 *SUSPECT*
01 *AMISS*
***** *1/2*

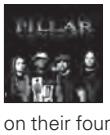
rock. It's less dense in general, as par for the course for most Robinson records. Overall, Norma Jean should be proud of *Redeemer*, as they took a logical step forward without risking too much of a hit to their existing following. [SOLID STATE] ANDREW SCHWAB

EVANESCENCE

THE OPEN DOOR

Growing up fatherless sometimes produces a dependent love for the feminine side. When I hear Amy Lee's vocals cooing at me atop slices of precision metal and bombastic drumming, I can't help but be charmed by her ways. By the end of the first track, "Sweet Sacrifice," I'm a slave for the next 12 songs. She's won me over, even if she resorts to profanity to express her inability to walk in perfection. I just can't believe her. She sounds so perfect and seductive. Mama should've warned me about girls like Amy. I command all my fingernails to grow long as I mentally prepare my new wardrobe of black. My senses become alert when I hear her speaking sense to an imaginary lover: "Call me when you're sober." Somehow, I know I'm being lied to. There's got to be a contrived formula behind the mixing board, striving to deliver a follow-up to the multi-platinum *Fallen*. All the G-knobs were turned on high: giant, gargantuan, and gorgeous. For some reason I cannot pull the curtain away, though. For some reason I believe her. Maybe it's because I don't hear the trendy hip-hop performance of a token male guest singer.

Beware the crafty female that posts the "Boys Keep Out" sign outside the clubhouse until she finishes her mesmerizing concoction that will slay all the neighborhood males. I've been taken prisoner, and the only way I'll ever see the light of day again is if my buddies slap me in the face and take me out for some cold refreshment and football (or an AC/DC concert). [WIND-UP] KERN COUNTY KID, THE



PILLAR

THE RECKONING

Oklahoma's Pillar sets a new standard and rattles the rafters like never before on their fourth full-length project for Flicker Records. Better songs, better riffs, bigger production, more attention to detail, better vocals and better overall dynamics make *The Reckoning* one of the best mainstream rock releases of 2006.

Right out of the gates things seem pretty consistent with previous Pillar projects. The album's first single "Everything" boasts a fists-in-the-air riff and epic chorus that puts it right in line with previous Pillar hits like "Fireproof" and "You Can't Bring Me Down." It is immediately noticeable, though, that despite its arena-esque swagger "Everything" boasts a richer melody and overall improved musicality than any previous Pillar tracks. Vocalist Rob Beckley no longer sounds like a rap/screamer trying his best to sing and guitarist Noah Henson hits a whole new level of tonal range and dynamic punch. As "Everything" ends with Beckley's best screaming yet, the range is tested as the textured and atmospheric intro to the equally massive sounding "Awake" churns from almost nothing into a full tidal wave. Lester Estelle's genre-stretching drum parts and Kalel's air-tight bass provide the perfect launching pad for the rest of the disc.

At times more ambient and haunting, and at others more musically intense than previous efforts, an overall level of consistency runs throughout. There is not a single throw-away track; no filler at all. From the super-heavy jams "Tragedy," "Crossfire," to the best low-tempo dark ballads the band has ever attempted ("Wherever The Wind Blows," "Angel In Disguise,") to actual Foo-like power-pop ("Sometimes") and a cool instrumental number ("Elysian") that channels Satriani's surfing alien very effectively, *The Reckoning* is one of those rare modern rock albums that manages musical diversity, real emotional dynamics and overall consistency but still just plain rocks hard.

Amazingly, Pillar has put together a record in *The Reckoning* that is more accessible to listeners and resoundingly heavier and chunkier than anything they have ever attempted. [FLICKER] JOHN J. THOMPSON

DISCIPLE

SCARS REMAIN

Disciple made an amazing jump between *Back Again* and 2005's self-titled disc. Working with whiz-kid producer Travis Wyrick, they gave themselves an audio facelift, wiping off the sagging metal lurches and tired riffs in favor of shorter, choppy chords and notes that better reflected the music around them. They've quickly followed up that twice-released album with a new collection of songs that seems to drive in the same direction, but pauses long enough with the door open to collect a few of their old NASCAR buddies for their next ride. Wyrick dials in some monster sounds and Kevin Young delivers some sweet sing-along choruses. They're living with their new sound, for sure, but it sounds like maybe these tight-fitting shirts aren't as comfortable as they are cool looking. They launch into a couple of tirades, including the sports highlight type theme song, "Game On," which almost reaches back to the "My Daddy Can Whip Your Daddy" days with some righteous, seething anger at the devil. When you hear the clipping/slamming power chords in the title track, you'll realize that metal is in these guy's DNA, yet to their credit they are sounding as raw and modern as their contemporaries.

[SRE] KERN COUNTY KID, THE

SKILLET

COMATOSE

This album starts off with more fanfare than a new Hollywood blockbuster, which tells you how larger than life the production and sounds are. This is big arena rock, folks. While it's not coming from a band on the pre-approved "cool-to-like list," it might find its way wrapped around your ears anyway. If Gavin Rossdale wanted to throw down some songs with Linkin Park, these 11 songs might be their blueprint. "Falling Inside The Black," "Rebirthing" and "The Last Night" are such big and bold rockers that they'll likely get the kind of attention in movies, television and radio that they might out-Evanescence that other October 3rd dark rock album release. It's hard to argue with good melody and stellar production sonics. "Rebirthing" utilizes a powerful synergy of strings, drums, guitar and keyboards that usher in a building tension that, with layered multiple vocals, deliver the big prize with each chorus. "The Last Night" takes an operatic feel with a male/female call and response that further drives home the song's universal lyrical appeal of leaving the present circumstances behind. "This is the last night you'll spend alone…" While the title track and the song "Better Than Drugs" might offend the culturally sensitive among us – as they compare and contrast a love relationship to a desperate condition and addiction – their simplicity might cross over smoother than a frozen frappuccino on a warm autumn night. Be prepared for Skillet to become a household name this year. [ATLANTIC/LAVA] DOUG VAN PELT

Ratings

	DV	Writer
Norma Jean *Redeemer*	03*	03
Evanescence *The Open Door*	04	03*
Pillar *The Reckoning*	04	03*
Disciple *Scars Remain*	03	03*
Skillet *Comatose*	03*	
A Love Ends Suicide *In The Disaster*	04	03*
Bloodlined Calligraphy *Ypsilanti*	03	03
Hundred Year Storm *Hello From The Children Of Planet Earth*	04	03
Action Reaction *3 Is The Magic Number*	03*	04
Kids In The Way *Apparitions of Melody the Dead Letters Edition*	03	03
War Of Ages *Pride Of The Wicked*	04	03*

A LOVE ENDS SUICIDE

IN THE DISASTER

A Love Ends Suicide doesn't wait on you to blast into their record… Well, that's not entirely true – they wait about five seconds. THEN they release it all on you, double-bass drum all over the place, wicked picking complete with harmonies, the works. It may be a surprise at first, but don't expect it to change from then on out. It starts fast, ends faster.

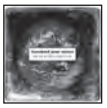
The band, a quintet from California, has formed an extremely tight metal outfit, plotting songs from start to finish with all the metal tendencies. The fast intros lead to faster verses, which lead to the breakdowns. All the songs hit pretty hard, and you'll find yourself chanting alongside the CD. Unfortunately, A Love Ends Suicide's take on metal – possibly by throwing in singing and hardcore-style breakdowns? – is nothing new. Take "Heroes of Faith," for example. About halfway through, you find your crowd-ready chant, move to the sing-along, and by the end, what's moved to sweeping guitar anthems drop for a straight, no-messing-around breakdown, before ending with a guitar solo. It's a good representation of their songs.

"Another Revolution" paints the same picture. Kick it off with fast verses and solid guitar work, move through to the singing part, nail the time changes, bring down the house with the outro. The good thing here is that the band has no shortage of talent. The songwriting is great, the song parts are all stellar, the guitar work is even better. (In fact, the guitars can be extremely humbling.) Their songs prove that the metal is there, and the metal is fast (and the faster the metal, the better). The CD is full of audience-ready songs. It's well-done and polished. It's well-written – but it's no breakthrough. Bands have walked down the metal road before and done it well. A Love Ends Suicide is right there with them: It's well above average, but their take on the genre is nothing extremely original – but that won't stop me from listening to it. ~~[METAL BLADE] DAVID STAGG~~

BLOODLINED CALLIGRAPHY

YPSILANTI

The much anticipated new album from a really talented hardcore metal frenzy... Described by many as the perfect new hard rock quartet, their new compilation lives up to these praises. Female fronted hard rock bands are simply few and far between, and especially talented ones, so this band really is something special. Ypsilanti, Michigan, is home of these rockers and, although virtually unknown, the city has been given the great privilege of being the title of their latest album. Bloodlined Calligraphy incorporate a wide variation of sounds from the likes of rock (giants) Metallica and Exodus as well as their own ideas crammed into this album. The obvious hard work that went into it is evident from start to finish. There is some mind-blowing instrumentation, racing drumbeats, astonishing guitar riffs and as usual, gripping vocals from their lead singer Ally. This group continue to astonish the world of metal and I'm sure will continue to. Tracks like "Last Goodbye" and "They want you silent" really make the album something exceptional. I truly love the new work from the Michigan metal-heads. Don't miss this one. ~~[FACEDOWN RECORDS] DANIEL BLACK~~



HUNDRED YEAR STORM

HELLO FROM THE CHILDREN OF PLANET EARTH

Here's to new beginnings | Here's to a new start. As if to toast their debut release on Floodgate Records/East West, Hundred Year Storm begins *Hello From The Children Of Planet Earth* by repeating this simple acclamation. And let me just say, "cheers!" Keeping in step with their self-titled 2004 EP, this Texas band produces a sound that tugs on so many genres that what is created seems to be emotion in motion. The use of sound clips over exploding guitars, like on the closing "Pilot's Last Broadcast," help to fuel this emotion. "Yesterday, We Had It All" plays like the typical love song, while the nine minute track "The Golden Record" plays like a soundtrack to discovery, balancing the fine line between finding something terrible and something terribly beautiful. It's this seeking throughout the record that just might make this new beginning a fruitful one. ~~[FLOODGATE RECORDS/EAST WEST] KELLY BENSON~~

ACTION REACTION

3 IS THE MAGIC NUMBER

The potential here is devastating. The full-length debut for Action Reaction is full of diverse alternative rock tracks that feature stellar vocals from frontman Jason Gleason, imaginative melodies, a wide array of instrumentation, and memorable hooks from the outset. The result is an album that completely takes the listener by surprise and hints at even greater things to come. While there is much to speak of, the starting point must be Gleason, former vocalist of Further Seems Forever. His voice is tailor-made for this music. While Action Reaction doesn't rock as hard as their Equal Vision Records labelmates, the band still earns its rock cred on songs such as "The Exit Poll Amen" and opening track "Sinner's Algebra." Still, Gleason shines strongest on more melodic numbers such as "Come See My Grave," where his range is showcased and his voice comes over the top of clever rock riffs. The album is both light and dark, moody and imaginative. Gleason and company team with an impressive production team that includes Jason Lader (Rilo Kiley) and Ray Martin (Bloc Party, Gorillaz) to craft a stunning rock debut from beginning to end. ~~[EQUAL VISION] MATT CONNER~~

KIDS IN THE WAY

APPARITIONS OF MELODY

Those nutty Flicker Records folks have brought us the latest trend in CD sales: the 'Special Edition.' You know, take a popular CD that came out several months ago and to tide fans over, release the same CD with neato special features. It's new and improved! So is it worth your hard earned bucks to get the extras? Well the Kids in the Way CD comes with two new songs and a bonus DVD. The new music is not a throwaway from a previous session, but both songs are strong musically and lyrically. There seems to be more going down than what's on the surface. New tune "Fiction" says "We are not poets, we have no right to make amendments." While the Kids may not be penning new legislation any time soon, they certainly are poets, and darn good ones. The other new song is "Getting Over You, Getting Over Me." Both tunes seem to be dealing with past relationships that did not turn out to be all they could have been. Light on hope, heavy on despair. The DVD offers three videos and an in-studio documentary. The title cut video, "Apparitions of Melody," has great effects, tornado like winds and liberal use of eye make-up. Top notch all the way. The other two clips are from the Kids' first record. "Phoenix With A Heartache" has the band rocking in a room and showcasing tons of passion from singer David Paul Pelsue. The "We Are" video shows the Kids in a skate park with all manner of mayhem around them. The wild fans take to the anthem and the BMXers are flying high. Then comes the documentary. It is short (15 min.) and shows some cool concert footage, rehearsal and recording studio stuff, the N.Y. subway system and the obligatory goof-off shots. Next time I would love to see something that shows the real heart of the band, a little about their purpose. The CD insert is essentially the same. If you look close, you find that the band is endorsed by Billy Joe's Tattoos. Overall, the Kids' vibe is getting darker, some would say more realistic. Here's hoping that the anthems don't die and the glare of good news cracks through a sometimes bleak reality. There's no question, the Kids are growing up. ~~[FLICKER] PAUL Q-PEK~~

WAR OF AGES

PRIDE OF THE WICKED

War of Ages is back, and better than ever, with their sophomore album, their debut on Facedown Records, entitled *Pride of The Wicked*. True to form, War of Ages brings it hard and heavy with many guitar solos and breakdowns, definitely showing off their metal influences, while still managing to add gang vocals and spoken word, which mix very smoothly (all) adding to the hardcore sound. Needless to say, this release is more ambitious than their last, with a more pristine sound, a lot like Still Remains, just not as melodic. To top it all off, these guys in War of Ages wear their beliefs on their sleeves and are not afraid to sing about them, spewing lyrics that show that they know what they stand for. I love to see that in a band, and rumor has it that I am a sucker for gang vocals. ~~[FACEDOWN] RAND RENFROW~~

[Read more Album Reviews on the flipside, pg. 30']

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The Christian & Art

WITH KEMPER CRABB

The Disconnect: Why Evangelicals Make Bad Art (Part the Second)

In the last issue, we began to explore the question of why it was that, in an America in which between one-fourth and one-fifth of the population reportedly profess to be Evangelicals, there is such a markedly low creation proportionally of quality art by Christians (whether dance, film, music, television, etc.). It was postulated that, though Evangelicals claim to know and love the All-Beautiful Creator-God, and to have His Written Word to direct them "in every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16-17), their failure as a community to provide quality art to the Church and the world is directly related to their lack of knowledge and understanding of the Bible. Two reasons were proffered to explain this lack of knowledge: laziness and bad theology. To the first of these reasons we now turn.

It is commonly held that Evangelicals know the Bible better than any other section of the global population. Scarily, this opinion is undoubtedly true. Why is this scary? For the simple reason that, just because Evangelicals know their Bibles better than the rest of humanity doesn't mean they know it very well, at all.

It is true that there are many theologians, pastors, teachers, and so forth who do know their Bibles well (some exceedingly well). However, compared with the number of extant Evangelicals in America (or all the West, for that matter) the number of those well-versed in Scripture is exceedingly small, especially among the rank-and-file believers who aren't leaders or officers in the Church.

How do I know this? Ask yourself (or ask them) how many of your Christian friends or fellow parishioners can explain (even very simply) the content of the 25 verses of the Epistle of Jude, or the 13 verses of John's Second Epistle, or the 25 verses of the Book of Philemon. How many can simply outline (or even give the main thrust) of 2 Timothy (3 chapters) or 1 Timothy, Galatians, or Philippians (4 chapters apiece)? These are all very short Books. How many believers do you know who can tell you what was made on each of the 7 Days of Creation listed in Genesis 1? For that matter, how many can even list the Books of the Bible from memory? How can we even begin to say we know our Bibles when most of us don't even know these basic things?

Many Christians would respond to this by saying, "That's just too much to learn," yet many of these same people can tell you things like the batting records of every baseball player on their favorite team, or the lyrics of hundreds of popular songs, or every character (and all the plot lines) of their favorite soap operas for years running, or highly detailed, nuanced information about their job. Many Evangelicals spend 8+ hours a day working, and much of their time outside of the work-place trying to figure out how to improve their performance on the job, yet would say that they had no time to study the Bible.

None of the things I listed above are bad in themselves, of course. However, we always find time to do the things that matter the most to us. It would appear that we simply don't want to study the Perfect Word of God more than we want to watch T.V., or listen to music, or (and this is the heart of the matter) please ourselves. We have made idols of our pleasures and/or our quest for prosperity (and thus, of ourselves) and elevated these idols above our love of Christ and His Word.

We content ourselves with the little snippets we hear from teachings about basic doctrines, rather than using them as springboards to dive deeply into the Scriptures. We convince ourselves that, since we know these basic doctrines, we know our Bibles. Then we wonder why we can't change the world when we don't even know how to think Biblically about the vocations that God has called us to (including, vitally, the various artistic callings). It is our responsibility to learn about our callings Biblically so that we can do our callings effectively (things like, say, producing great art…). For most Evangelicals, though, our personal peace and affluence (e.g., our pleasure) are our true gods.

We Christians rightly disparage the hypocrisy of the Pharisees. As Jesus taught of them in Matthew 15:8: "These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me." We Evangelicals profess love for Jesus, sing about Him, get emotional about Him, and so forth. Yet when it comes to actually doing His Will outside our worship services, even to doing the simple things like spending time studying His Word, we don't do so well. We come more and more to resemble the Pharisees. Then we wonder why our culture is growing so pagan.

We must ask ourselves if our hearts are where our words say they are. We do the things that are most important to us. If we are not obediently studying and learning the Bible, we must ask ourselves why that is. What do you value most?

[kempercrabb.net]

The way I see it
Chris Wighaman

It could be because I have a superhero style Bible that I love to leaf through. It could be because the recent wave of superhero movies. Or it could be just because I'm a freak and secretly want to be a superhero. Whatever the reason I always seem to find things that relate to God in superhero stories, and things that relate to superheroes in God's stories.

"Faster than a speeding bullet, able to leap tall buildings in a single bound…" The writer of Hebrews takes a similar 'super' approach to describing the word of God: "Sharper than a double edged sword, it penetrates even to divide soul and spirit, joints and marrow; able to judge the thoughts and attitudes of the heart, uncovers the secret deeds of all … look up in the sky it's an essay, it's a book, It's The Living Word!" [Hebrews 4:12-13 –The New Wigman Translation]

Through God's Word He cuts into the meat of our lives, and since nothing is hidden from God, His Word can examine us, uplift us or – scarier still – correct us. His Word is a tool, one through which we can find out more about God as well as find out more about ourselves. God's Word is living, it was written so many years ago we might forget that it is one of the ways in which God speaks. The stories and instructions contained in it were given to a specific group of people in a specific time, but the beauty of the way God's Word works is that when we look into it, even a couple thousand years after it was written, we can be given encouragement, instruction, and correction.

God wants so much more for our lives, He wants us to be more, do more, love more, give more, live more. We can't get ourselves to that place, only He can, and what this passage lets us know is that when we spend time in the Bible, God can help get us to that place. It acts as a mirror and a compass. The Bible is a place we can go to examine where our lives are now and find out where they should be headed next. So, dust off your copy of God's Word and open it up and begin to be transformed.

Devotions
with Greg Tucker

"For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction."
–Newton's Third Law of Motion

Recently I visited a man paralyzed from the waist down, the unfortunate result of a drinking binge two weeks earlier. The good news is I led him to Christ in his hospital room. The bad news was the question he immediately asked. "So Greg, now that God's forgiven me, how long till I get my legs back?"

"Uh, well…."

God is kind to forgive us of our sins when we ask, but even though the price is paid for all eternity, he tends to stick us with the tab here on earth. Big or small, there is usually a consequence for every bad decision.

I proved it myself last summer. Thought I'd save a few bucks by ordering my checks online instead of paying the bank's exorbitant fee, and since I like the Old West I chose a cowboy background. For an extra $3 the ad said I could put a quote above my signature. "Anything you want," they offered, so I scoured the Internet for wisdom from Gene Autry, Tex Ritter – all the greats – before settling on this statement from the Duke:

"Life is tough, but it's tougher if you're stupid." John Wayne

At the last minute I changed my mind and erased it. At least I thought I did. Turns out I forgot to nix the last four words, so now above my signature is this line:

you're stupid," John Wayne

Today I have 4,000 of these checks, and you know what? I'm starting to think maybe he's right. Even though I regret the oversight I'm stuck with the end result.

Fortunately, not every bad decision will end in tragedy or ridicule, but make no mistake, neither a repentant heart nor a loving Savior will take the dent out of your car. A small blunder that leaves your soul intact can still end up changing your life.

[Greg Tucker lives in your computer at HopeCCA.com]

PICK OF THE LITTER

The Dark Forest

If you've been paying attention, you've already heard about this great dark and gothic rock opera. The Dark Elf usurps the throne of the forest, which becomes darker and darker. The evil ruler lusts for total power, so he seeks out a sacrifice to usher in eternal darkness. But that's just part of the storyline... Written, composed, and directed by Conrad, this disc offers some great, doomy music with sweeping strings, and dramatic vocals to carry the storytelling singing along. Think of a more classical approach (a la Wedding Party) than, say the ultra falsetto theatrics of Saviour Machine. After a couple of listens (this would be a good headphones album, by the way...) it won't come as a surprise that they actually perform this thing as an opera on occasion. It's a far cry from his days with Ghoti Hook, that's for sure! (Doug Van Pelt)
decapolis.com

The Anomoly

Raw, powerful, and screaming from one breakdown to the next, this metallic hardcore outfit from the Chicago area played as many generator stages at Cornerstone as they could, and they were also featured on the debut edition of the HM Mag Podcast. Not treading new ground, but making each song as heavy as possible. (DV)
theanomolyband@gmail.com

Neocracy

Fast and solid double bass drumming accent some killer twin guitar work. Slightly thin production holds them back a little, but *Instruments Of Abandonment* clearly shows that they've got the power and skills to write brutal tunes. While mostly black metal, there's a few elements of hardcore gang vocals and breakdowns. (DV)
myspace.com/neocracy

Psalters

This full-blown experimental group is a sight to behold live, as they utilize multiple instruments, percussion, and voices to create a very real vibe that's pointed to worship. *The Divine Liturgy of the Wretched Exiles* takes the beautiful concept of identifying with exiles in our spiritual journey as displaced yet redeemed sinners awaiting our heavenly home. Printed up as a 20-page booklet, it really is a liturgical work – complete with didjeridoo and atonal vocals to carry the listener to another place. (DV)
psalters.org

Takota

It's not often that someone creates old school melodic hard rock and does it great. *The Ivory Tower* should thrill fans of Balance Of Power, yet they somehow build a bridge to the current time with use of instrumentation and speedy, choppy choruses. This band really takes a fresh approach to an old sound, with great vocals, stellar production, tight musicianship, and really good songs... (DV)
myspace.com/takotamusic

The Weather Inside

Very cool, breathing, airy sonic soundscapes. *Colourful Year* whispers you, cooing the listener into a dance. Very nice. (DV)
theweatherinside.com

Blessed By Blood

The screaming-bloody-murder vocals of this band stand out in this cool post-hardcore band, marrying fast, romping almost classic metal jams with intense, shrill screaming. (DV)
myspace.com/blessedbyblood518

Remove The Veil

Tough guy metal with guttural screams and those counter-point style guitar riffs. Not quite as Southern as Maylene, but slow and pummeling like that. (DV)
myspace.com/removetheveil

The Phlegmatics

Jonathan Marshall, from Atomic Opera's early days and Greytown strikes a new chord with this humorous approach to raw melodic punk. Think Weezer meets Green Day. (DV)
thephlegmatics.com

Lone Wolf & Cub

Wonder, Is Ground On Frost? is a dreamy, airy instrumental album that lies somewhere between the lo-fi creativeness of Anathallo and Sufjan Stevens. (DV)
lonewolfandcubmusic.com

Altruist

A Canvas of Dreams shows that Altruist is a brutal, heavy, and scary band, even with slightly weak production. They're quite diverse, too, with huge dynamic swings between soft and beautiful picking and fast and a full black metal furious assault. (DV)
myspace.com/altruistprog

GHS FEATURED ARTIST

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PX-575

Casio improves on its already very successful Privia line of Digital Pianos with the introduction of the PX-575R. The piano includes 88 full size hammer actions keys to provide the user with the feel of a grand piano. With 670 preset tones plus 224 user tones and 166 preset rhythms plus 16 user rhythms it's the perfect fit from home use to professional applications. The elegantly stylish design of the PX-575R gives it an appearance of a fine piece of audio equipment. Compact and lightweight (under 30lbs) it can be used in either a stand-alone table top configuration or with a custom stylish stand. This flexibility means it can fit anywhere from the living room to the music room. It can also hook up to your computer via USB, and it even includes an SD card slot.

The main features of this digital piano include 620 standard tones, 50 drawbar organ tones and 224 user tones for a total of 894. The drawbar organ tones are controlled by nine digital drawbars with Leslie effect. Powerful effects such as DSP, reverb, chorus gives the player the ability to customize your sound. A 4-band EQ is also included. The Auto Accompaniment feature allows you to play a chord and the rhythms, bass and chord parts will play automatically. The large LCD screen gives the player a lot in information making the keyboard more enjoyable then ever.

WK-8000

Looking for a high-end keyboard that will fit a multiple of needs, look no further then the Casio WK-8000. Priced $100 lower than the Yamaha DGX-505 with an abundance of features you won't go wrong with this keyboard. The WK-8000 has 88 piano style keys with touch response and 670 preset tones and 224 user tones available. 50 of those tones include drawbar organ tones with Leslie effects and it doesn't stop there. This instrument also includes an on-board sequencer and a mixer for unparalleled possibilities. You will be blown away by the powerful 6w 2-way bass reflex speakers that are built in to the keyboard. Hook up the keyboard to your computer via USB, and it also even includes an SD card slot.

The WK-8000 allows you to select up to a total of 894 tones including synthesized sound and orchestral sounds. With this powerful instrument you can also MAP wave files from your PC to any key and save as a user preset. The 894 tones, 16-channel – 6track 5-song sequencer, and 242 DSP effects can be edited to your preference; this is a true controller workstation keyboard. The Auto Accompaniment feature allows you to play a chord and the rhythms, bass and chord parts will play automatically. The large LCD screen gives the player a lot in information making the keyboard more enjoyable then ever. A matching custom stand and sustain pedal in also included, all for under $500.

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The I-5 is designed with a cardioid polar pattern, allowing it to focus on the particular instrument that is being miked without picking up other instruments or ambient noise on stage. With a smooth and uniform frequency response of 50 Hz – 16 kHz and an ability to handle sound pressure levels in excess of 140 dB, the I-5 can be used for a wide variety of applications and for all genres of music.

"I'm in the studio with P.O.D. and lovin' the I-5 on guitar cabs. Great punch in the upper mids and perfect for heavy guitars that need that special drive. Also fantastic on snare – it can sure handle serious SPL's!" —Travis Wyrick (Producer, Engineer, Mixer – P.O.D., Charlie Daniels, Pillar)

VP of Sales and Marketing, Cliff Castle, states: "The I-5 was brought about by demands from our dealers and customers for a general purpose, high performance instrument microphone at a very competitive price. Over the past few years we have been produced a wide variety of application specific mics for drums and percussion – the I-5 is a synthesis of everything we have learned along the way. Even though the I-5 is aimed at a very wide audience and will be produced in high volume, it will still maintain the same tight quality specifications and quality control standards that is now a trademark of all Audix products."

The I-5, with a suggested retail price of $179, will include a heavy duty mic clip and carrying pouch. Audix is a leading U.S. manufacturer of high-quality microphones and powered speakers for the live sound and recording markets. For more information, contact Audix sales at (800) 966-8261, or visit the company on the Internet at audixusa.com.

THE AUDIX RAD-360 WIRELESS MICROPHONE SYSTEM

If reliability and sound quality are what you are looking for in a wireless microphone system, then look no further than AUDIX. Audix has made a name for itself by its extensive user list that includes such bands as, Pearl Jam, Matisyahu, Blink 182, Pillar, MXPX, The Red Hot Chili Peppers, Jimmy Eat World, Fall Out Boy, Tool, The Donnas, Spoken, Stellar Kart and New Found Glory to name a few. Now they have gone wireless! The long awaited **Audix RAD-360 wireless system** is now available and it packs a one-two punch. First of all, it comes with the most powerful transmitters in its price range (50 mW). That is 67% more output power than the standard 30 mW transmitters that most manufacturers offer. Secondly, it has the longest battery life (up to 15 hours with two AA alkaline batteries) of any system on the market. It has already become the go to wireless system with such touring Christian Artists such as Casting Crowns, Kutless, Avalon, Little Feat, and Denver and the Mile High Orchestra.

The Audix **RAD-360** is a frequency agile UHF Wireless microphone system with 193 selectable frequencies and a dual tuner, true diversity receiver. The RAD-360 is designed for a wide range of applications from handheld vocal mic transmitters to lavaliere mics, headset, horns and guitar systems.

Here is what Darrin Hughes the FOH engineer for Casting Crowns has to say, "The Audix RAD 360 system is a beautiful thing. From start to finish, it is exactly the quality that you expect from Audix. We use the OM7 capsule on Mark's voice and it's fantastic. You can't find a better thought-out wireless solution than this!"

The RAD-360 handheld transmitters have a modular design of the threaded capsule housing assembly that allow the user to easily change the transmitter mic capsule from one model to another (such as an OM3 to an OM5) in a matter of seconds. Audix also offers an optional amplified Antenna Distribution System (the ADS-4), that allows up to 4 systems to be run off a single pair of antennas and 4 systems to run off of one DC power supply.

With 5 services held every weekend at Living Hope Church in Vancouver, Washington, reliability is definitely paramount for Kelsey Smith, Living Hope's Technical Director. Here is what he has to say about the Audix RAD-360, "With installing 8 total systems: six being handheld and two being guitar systems, one would have thought that a few problems would arise, especially with a brand new product. This was not the case. I have never had a single drop out! The microphone's actual sound and signal quality is so true to the wired mic versions that if I didn't know better, I would think they were plugged in!"

RAD-360 wireless systems are available in a wide variety of prepackaged configurations for the retail and contractor market. System retail prices vary from $799 and up. For more info, contact Gene Houck/National Sales Manager & Director of Christian Artist Relations at (800) 966-8261, or email at gene@audixusa.com. You may also visit the company on the Internet at audixusa.com

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GUITAR RESEARCH

Pioneer of Electric Guitar Celebrated with Festivals and Special Guitars

"Eddie Durham is the greatest underrated genius of the twentieth century" said jazz historian Phil Schaap at the opening of a week-long festival at the Jazz at Lincoln Center's Commemoration of the 100th Anniversary of the musician, composer and inventor. Exaggeration, of course, but consider the man. Eddie Durham, born in Texas and member of a family band, made his mark as composer and arranger with the influential Bennie Moten band and Count Basie. His hits are recognizable to many who do not know his name or the names of the tunes. He arranged the famous Glen Miller record *In the Mood*, called the soundtrack for three generations of young lovers. As a musician, he recorded as a guitarist and trombonist. He developed a style of single string jazz playing made popular by Charlie Christian with Benny Goodman's band and a method of circular breathing that trombonists use to sustain long phrases. During World War II he arranged for the "all girl" band "International Sweethearts of Rhythm." Durham's hometown, San Marcos, TX celebrated his centennial with a two-day festival.

It is as an inventor that prompted Guitar Research to create two models of jazz guitars as **Eddie Durham 100th Anniversary limited editions**. Eddie was the first person to amplify his guitar with a pickup of his own design and the first to record with an electric guitar. The models include one with two built-in pickups and another with a "floating" pickup attached to the pickguard as used by many jazz masters. The first, with a 16-inch wide hollow body comes in red or gold. The other, with a 17-inch body comes in a natural blonde wood or tobacco sunburst finish. Both have gold hardware, full binding and other deluxe features. All versions are available for left handed players. Locally, they can be seen at Sam Ash music stores.

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TISA

Pillar
POSITIVE HEADSPACE

BY DOUG VAN PELT

***THE RECKONING* IS A TOUGH-GUY HEAVY METAL NAME FOR AN ALBUM; BUT FOR THE MEMBERS OF PILLAR IT'S NOT AS MACHO AS IT SOUNDS. YOU KNOW THE IMAGE: A MUSCLE-BOUND HERO EXACTING VENGEANCE ON THOSE THAT HAVE DONE HIM WRONG. INSTEAD, THE BAND HAS TURNED THE TITLE ON ITS SIDE, FOCUSING ON RECONCILIATION – A SETTLING OF ACCOUNTS WITH HONEST CONFESSION, REPENTANCE, AND FORGIVENESS..**

"We recorded this album over the course of almost a full year," relates the band's dynamic singer and lyricist, Rob Beckley. "Lyrically, it's very broad. It's not just one story. Numerous things happened over a year, but the one thing that was the true theme was to find resolution in your hurt. To bring closure to things that you've held a grudge towards or people that you haven't been able to forgive or things that you've done that you know you need to take control of. For me personally, I needed to make sure – for therapeutic reasons, really – that I poured my heart out on this record. I felt like a football player at the end of the game, saying, 'I gave everything I had to give. I left it all on the field.'"

He pauses to tell me the irony of how some of the very same things they've dealt with were thrust in his face the morning of this interview. "Somebody that told us that they wouldn't play our music, because we weren't 'spiritually mature' enough... Now I'm able to laugh instead of just holding that grudge, you know?"

Did I ever. It wasn't too long ago that I got a call out of the blue from Beckley, where he asked me for advice on how to have and show patience to some of those well-meaning but annoying and bent-out-of-shape Christians that can't seem to leave their on-a-pedestal Christian music heroes alone. He was about to go on another of the band's long-winded tours and he'd had enough of the judgment that he and his peers face in just about every city; and he knew he was about to go out and face some more of it.

"I can let it go. I understand that I have to do what I'm called to do. It's that thing where you know that you're doing what you're supposed to do; and when you're confident in it, it doesn't matter what anyone else does – they can't keep you from doing what you know you're supposed to do. That's where we are right now. I'm confident I'm supposed to be doing what I'm doing. So, we just kind of take those comments with a grain of salt now, and say, 'Bless your ignorance.'"

I'm sure he makes the last acidic statement only to himself, as a way to remind him that the person bringing the pain probably doesn't intend to inflict emotional damage. It really sounds like Beckley's head and heart are finally in a good place after a couple years of subtle turmoil. "I think I've grown spiritually over the last couple of years. I've come to the point where I'm closer to God now than I've ever been. It's that whole cliché statement where I feel so close to God now that I realize how far away I am still. I do really feel awesome about what God's done in my life, my marriage, and in this band, and in my church. It's awesome to feel this way and be excited to go home to go to church. To be excited to hear about things that are happening amongst Christians, instead of being so turned off by all the TBN factor."

Good head space, indeed.

Pillar was pushed by their long-time producer, Travis Wyrick, who coached them with ideas, suggestions, and honest feedback. "He was the drill sergeant, giving you that push that you needed to keep going when you didn't want to keep going." Their new management team, Cook Management (P.O.D.), really pushed them as well, telling them they needed to "write the best record that you've ever written … right now!"

The band spent over a year writing the songs, going into their dressing rooms each day and laying down tracks on portable recording devices. They arrived at the studio with a good 20 songs in hand. Old riffs were added to new ones, and more new songs were born. "We did a lot of cut and pasting with ideas," explains Beckley. "Like, 'Hey, Noah, you've got that one chorus idea. Mike has this cool bass line. Let's see how those things fit together, and put a bridge to it. Let's construct and let's build a song. Let's try things we've never done. Let's don't just do a verse/chorus, verse/chorus, bridge/coda, (and) it's over. Let's do a song that feels good. Let's write because that's what we want to write. Let's not just write radio friendly songs for every song. Let's have fun and show as much of what the band is capable of doing.' I personally feel like it's the best record we've written."

Every band always says their latest album is their greatest. Wouldn't it be refreshing for an artist – just once – to one day admit that their latest wasn't all that? Imagine Brian Johnson saying, "Yeah, we really hit our peak with *Back In Black* and have never quite matched that magic since then…" But that kind of perspective only comes with time to look back at it all. Beckley confided with me that he'd like the band's legacy to be a

"It's awesome to feel this way and be excited to go home to go to church. To be excited to hear about things that are happening amongst Christians, instead of being so turned off by all the TBN factor."

reputation of hard work. When you measure the progress from *Above* to *Fireproof* to *Where Do We Go From Here*, it's hard to quickly jump to the aforementioned assessment and management goal. But when you couple these fresh new songs with the band's rigorous touring schedule and penchant for making every note count on stage, they'll make fans feel like it's their best album yet, too.

The recurring theme of reconciliation, forgiveness, and the reckoning most poignantly reaches an apex in the album's showstopper, "Angel In Disguise." They take "Janie's Got A Gun" and change the angles. A father sexually molests his daughter. His wife later finds out. Daughter leaves home. Momma dies, daughter returns to take care of father, who then asks for forgiveness. Yet every chorus refers to an unspecified "she" as being an "angel in disguise." I'm probably not the only one that'll be confused, so I asked for an explanation.

"I kinda left it a little bit open for interpretation," he admits. "I didn't want to give it all away. It's basically a family that I've known where that's exactly what happened – the father was molesting both the son and the daughter in the family. They were too afraid to talk about it. The mom found out. In the first verse, the mom was the angel to the daughter. She got her stable and got her out of the situation. In the second verse, the husband realizes he's been screwing up and messing around and doing this thing. His wife tells him that she loves him despite all that and it finally hits him that she's his angel. At the end… I'm no M. Night Shyamalan, but if I were to endure that type of pain, it would be so hard to truly forgive someone. As the mom passes away, the daughter comes home to take care of the dad. She becomes his angel by coming home to take care of him, because he can't take care of himself anymore. Even though she went through all this stuff, he asks her for forgiveness and she's like, 'Look, I've tried. I'm here to take care of you. I love you. You're my dad. I've tried to forgive you, but I'm here.' I don't know what the answer to that story is, you know? But that was my take on it. Her compassion of coming home and taking care of her dad is forgiveness, but she still hasn't totally forgiven him. She says, 'I've already tried.' The last verse is basically the father telling the daughter that she's his angel in disguise. It's like, we've all got someone in our lives that kinda takes care of us when we need it, and we don't stop to think about God using other people in our lives."

The open-to-interpretation nature of the song adds to its mystique, making it this artist's best piece of writing, to be sure. His management should be proud. The inspiration came from a source that's legendary. "I was listening to a lot of Johnny Cash," he grins, "so I felt like telling a story."

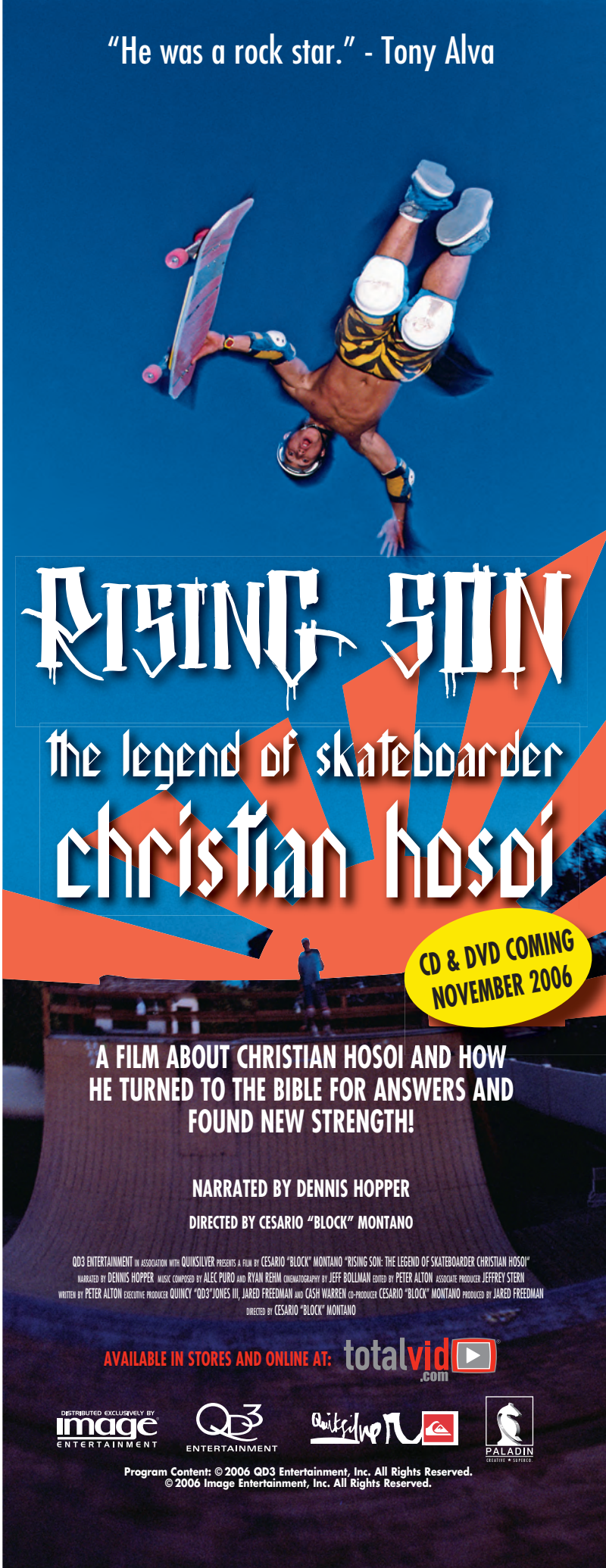
✖

never know what is going to happen at one of our shows because we don't even know. We don't take ourselves seriously at all. Why take yourself seriously when you play in a rock band? Still, I can't understand why people would pay money to come see us make fools of ourselves.

Schwab: Well, I am out of words for my feature. Anything to add?
Schuyler: Suck out the poison.

Whether you describe it with metaphors of glass slippers and rabbit holes, or sea creatures and evil monsters, the fairy tale life of full-time tourdom is simultaneously dreamlike and dreary to the ones who live it. And whether it's a girlfriend or a grandmother, you will lose touch with the real world, replacing reality with "fake fluorescent skies." It can become a war to hold on to who you really are beneath it all. And holding onto consciousness when there is venom in your veins may just require a true friend to come along and do something vile to rescue you. Sounds familiar doesn't it? It should.

✖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HM Disciple

I haven't led anyone to Christ in the last 20 years.

BY DOUG VAN PELT

I think I led someone in repeating after me the "sinner's prayer" during the "ministry time" at a conference or one of my band's concerts, but that doesn't really count as "soul winning," since I wasn't involved in leading them to their conversion experience, just watching over and guiding the last steps. There's a lot of theological ramifications and conclusions in the previous statement, but I think you know what I'm talking about: engaging in "evangelistic conversation" and/or a relationship where you share stories, Scripture, logic, and arguments about why we should "get saved."

It should be a foregone conclusion that we as believers should be involved in "evangelism." God made a covenant with Abraham (Genesis 12:3), where through Abraham's son "all the nations of the earth will be blessed." When Jesus delivered His last message to His disciples before He ascended to heaven, it was like giving His "marching orders" or at least a vital and very important set of instructions. He said: "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." We obviously have a purpose on this earth; or else why don't we just die or ascend to heaven immediately after our conversion? Jesus talked about a kingdom and made it clear that it was possible to live out and nurture (in effect multiplying) this kingdom. He went to great expense to make it possible – giving His own life to redeem us from the penalty of sin; and ushering in His Holy Spirit to enable us to live this new "abundant" life.

Evangelism can be a scary thing for us. In telling others about God and His love, we might be rejected or looked at as idiots. I distinctly remember two events in my early attempts to evangelize that went terribly wrong. I was 11 years old and trying to share Christ with my granddad. He wouldn't talk to me about it. I went into my Grandma Daisy's kitchen and asked her, "Why won't Grandpa Doc talk to me about Jesus?" She was so upset that she was moved to tears, telling me that "there's two things you don't talk about with other people: politics and religion." There was another moment the same year, where I placed little pamphlets ("tracts") in each students' envelope on the back of our coat closets. My teacher, Mrs. Tesdall, was empathetic to my cause, but so upset about me not being allowed to do this at school for legal reasons that she was moved to tears. So, two of my earliest attempts at being an evangelist hurt two people that I cared deeply about…

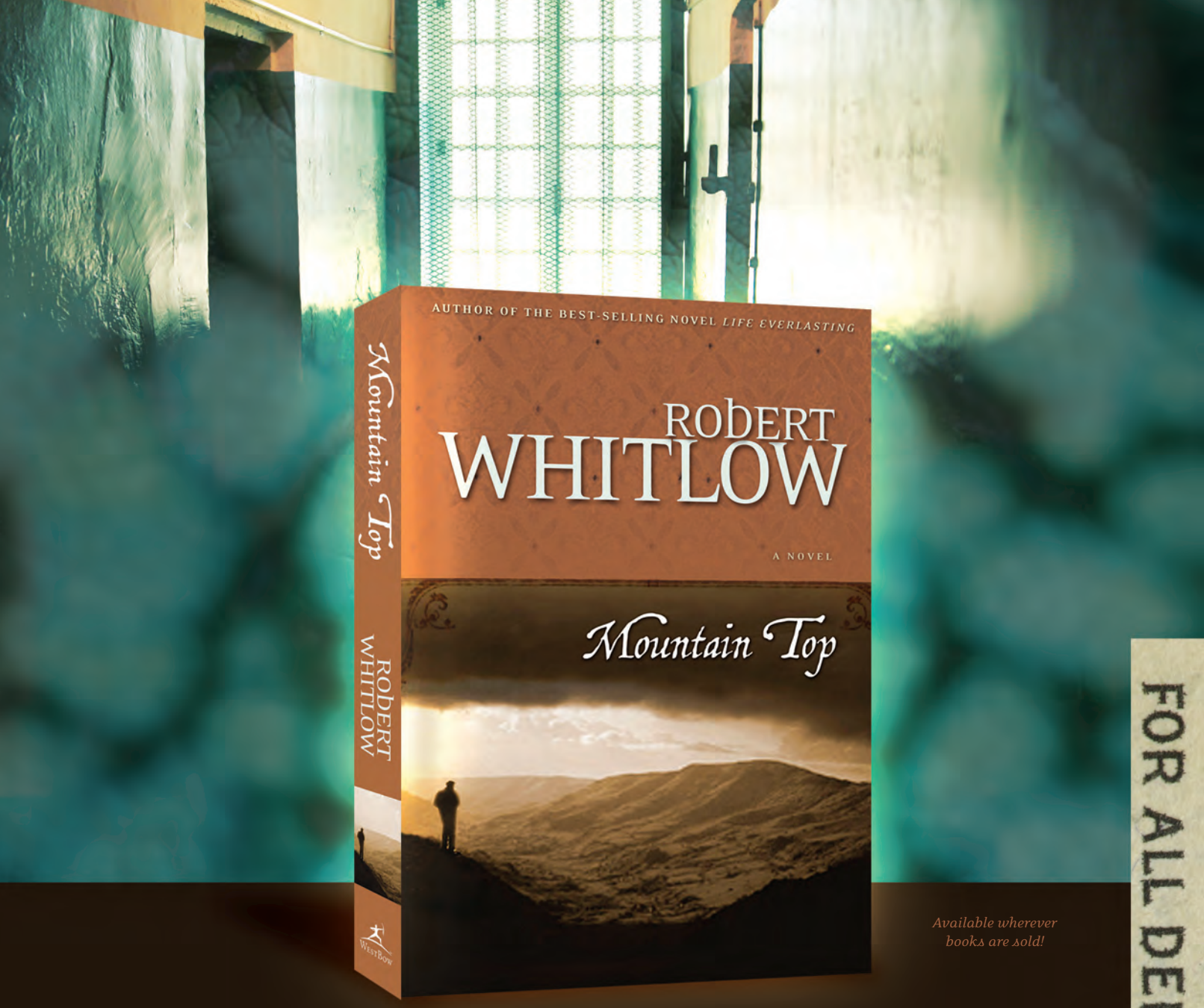
Two of the last times that I was given the privilege to lead someone to Christ occurred about 20 years ago; and they are a study in contrast. The first was a guy named Jerry, who I picked up hitchhiking. I was on my way to a friend's place, whose apartment had a pool and hot tub. As I passed this hitchhiker, he looked just like one of my former college roommates, so I did a big U-turn and picked him up. He was on his way back home to kill his dad. He had set out for California from Florida and had been robbed in Houston. With nothing left, he was going back to exact revenge on his dad for some reason. We pulled over on the shoulder of Highway 290 and I asked him to consider God. He declined, but I retorted, "Come on! What do you have to lose?" So I explained the story that Jesus had died for his sins by dying on the cross and he could be forgiven by simply telling God "Thank You" and receiving His offer of reconciliation. He believed and prayed that prayer. We went over to my friend's pool. I think I baptized him and when I gave him a hug and said, "I love you," it all made sense to Jerry and he was "in." I was able to help him find a job the very next day and he soon got back on his feet. He gave me his shirt that night, which I still own today and wear on occasion, always remembering him.

The other event was when I was at a girl's apartment that I had previously dated and still liked a lot. She didn't feel the same way about me, but she and her roommate and other friends were all still part of a close-knit group and a college fellowship at the University of Texas. A high school student knocked on her door, selling subscriptions to various magazines, which would allow him to win a prize. I asked him if he wanted to win a prize that would never expire or wear out. He was interested, so he came in and I explained the Gospel to him. He knelt down and prayed to receive Christ right there on the living room floor. All while this was happening, I was pondering the jacked-up thought of how this "spiritual talent" might look to this girl, possibly winning her heart back. "Doug just led the salesman to Christ!" shouted her roommate in amazement after the kid left. I had impressed my friends with this display of practical and opportunistic evangelism. What a schmuck I was, though, to entertain any of these prideful thoughts.

How was I involved in either one of these events? It had to be the grace (and patience) of God for any of this to happen. When someone is converted to Christ, it is a miracle, where God Himself visits a person by His Holy Spirit and makes a difference in their life. Any time this happens, a very important second step needs to take place: discipleship. People need help in learning how to be a disciple of Christ. The people God uses for this are usually those around the person, which would be us. We're all incomplete, all somewhat inadequate, yet we share what we have and God seems to make up where we lack. There are more elaborate studies of how this happens, but the simple and practical implications are that we love those around us – spreading God's kingdom to the unbeliever and believer alike – giving special care and attention to those new in the faith.

When I preached a sermon at the Sanctuary Tent at Cornerstone Festival ten years ago, the title of my talk was: "I Haven't Led Anyone to Christ in the Last 10 Years." Many people later spoke up in my behalf, encouraging me that my current role was different. While I appreciate the effort in trying to relieve me of any unnecessary guilt, all I wanted to do was repent, and by so doing encourage others maybe to do the same, but they seemingly wouldn't let me.

I repent. Lord, I don't claim to know how You want me to evangelize or draw others to You, so I need Your help. Help me to be someone who will inspire others to love You and want to know You. Guide me with Your Holy Spirit and keep me alert to any situations where You might want to use me to draw someone else closer to You. Amen.



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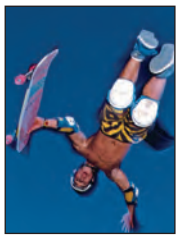

01 RISING SON, THE LEGEND OF SKATEBOARDER CHRISTIAN HOSOI
IMAGE ENTERTAINMENT

Sometimes the sweetest and truest stories of redemption come right from the depths of the profane. The uncensored reality of this documentary shows life with the cocaine warts, rowdy party life, and a volley of f-bombs not bleeped out. This portrayal somehow empowers the movie to reach in and touch those in and around Christian Hosoi's world, who were or are exactly where he (and many of us) were at. Drudging through the mire here makes the beautiful light all the more breathtaking and heartwarming.

It was awesome to see the detailed footage of genre-bending, innovative tricks like the "McTwist" and, of course, Hosoi's "Christ Air." All the other skate/rock stars are caught telling the story of how Hosoi was on an equal (or greater) plane with Tony Hawk – Alva, Adams, Hawk, Mountain, Gator. It's packed with action, with amazing footage, great narration by Dennis Hopper, and a clear-cut but not overly preachy explanation of how Hosoi came to Christ.

Anyone who got goosebumps watching either of the *Z-Boys* movies will have to add this one to their collection. *Doug Van Pelt*

02 THE SENTINEL *FOX VIDEO*
Starring Kiefer Sutherland as a Secret Service agent in a movie is either stroke of genius or an act of over-saturation. Throwing in Eva Longoria as his rookie partner is another risky move. Fortunately, Michael Douglas, spends half the movie running as a suspect and brings a thrilling performance. *DV*

03 30 DAYS *FOX VIDEO*
Morgan Spurlock (*Super Size Me*) and his fantastic handlebar mustache are out to challenge people to step out of their comfort zones for 30 days. This fascinating experiment is sure to spark heated discussions and the occasional nervous giggle from viewers. *Kelly Benson*

04 PRISON BREAK (SEASON 1) *FOX VIDEO*
The methodology of Michael Schofield's escape plan is about as complex and well-thought out as the plotlines of this fabulous (and a must-watch) series. While expecting the break-out in the pilot episode, the twists and character development make the long, drawn-out season as thrilling as *24*. *DV*

05 JUST MY LUCK *FOX VIDEO*
While the sight of Lindsay Lohan might make many HM readers run for the toilet, she pulls off another fun-loving performance as an ultra-lucky publicist with all the right NYC moves that switches "luck" with a total loser band manager. The results are funny and the caring moral heart-warming. *DV*

06 ARRESTED DEVELOPMENT (SEASON 3) *FOX VIDEO*
Arrested Development is the funniest show to ever be canceled…twice. Tying in characters and running jokes from seasons one and two, season three wraps up with an ending that will have you calling Bob Lob Law and sending "Save Our Bluths" banners to Fox Studios. *KB*

07 THE LEGEND OF LUCY KEYES *MTI HOME VIDEO*
"Are you a church-going woman?" Town crazy Gretchen Caswell asks mother Jeanne Cooley when she first moves to town, unawares of the "legend" based around a young girl's disappearance. While the sudden frenzied intro doesn't make sense, the rest of the movie is mildly scary and fun. *DV*

08 FRISBEE *JESTER MEDIA/PBS*
This documentary, sub-titled, *The Life and Death of a Hippie Preacher*, is long on chronicling the acts of the Holy Spirit in the early 70s Jesus Movement, and short on the AIDS/homosexuality controversy surrounding this beloved but overlooked pioneer evangelist that inspired the film in the first place. *DV*

	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08
SPIRITUAL RELEVANCY (%)	100	10	100	100	40	30	100	100
OBSCENITIES		13	25	22	8	3	7	
SCENES OF GORE		2	1	2			3	
NUDITY / SEXUALITY		1	2			26		

Body Piercing Saved My Life
Andrew Beaujon – Da Capo Press

Easily one of the most important books written on the subject of Christian Rock, not to mention being among the top of this year's rock journalistic endeavors. Andrew Beaujon, a senior staff writer for *Spin Magazine*, produces an unexpectedly objective, informative and well-researched book on a topic most rock journalists either avoid like the plague or reserve as a descriptive term synonymous with terrible music. Even with several official doors slammed in his face and big time crossover bands brushing him off, Beaujon captures honest candid conversations about the strengths, weaknesses, blessings and struggles of creating in the Christian rock genre with the likes of Steve Taylor, Mark Salomon, David Bazan, Brandon Ebel, David Crowder, Aaron Weiss and HM's Doug Van Pelt. Beaujon writes he is not a Christian. He said he is not opposed; he just isn't one. If it is safe to say music is the voice of a culture, then his outsider approach has allowed him to capture a unique perspective on the state of current Christian culture and could easily be read as a sociological study on the American Church. *Chris Troutman*

Encyclopedia of Punk Music & Culture
Brian Cogan – Greenwood Press

For what punk has come to mean today, this book does the job. Like the cultural distillation of the punk aesthetic itself, it's not particularly concerned with extravagant design, and the descriptions of its topics are mostly both sharp-witted and utilitarian. A journalist for many years, he is knowledgeable enough to create a punk encyclopedia that references everything from less famous but extremely influential bands to artistic landmarks like the Clash's ability to inspire people who weren't even truly aware of the punk philosophy (and not cutting them down for being Pop Art, either), and the influence of *Never Mind The Bullocks*, Kim Fowley, the concept of shambolic punk, Skrewdriver's devolution (from working class yobs to straight-out Nazi's), and much else in-between. For readers of HM, though, it would probably be most noteworthy that absolutely no Christian punk or hardcore bands show up here. But even beyond Christianity, where is the Sufi concept of whirling dervishes that inspired the pit, police spying in the punk scene, and weird horror movie hosts on at 3 AM television? Punk is such a strange thing to define, isn't it? *Chris Estey*

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★★★★★

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iPod accessories
Griffin Technology, Purple Ghost, Logitech, & Panasonic

(01) Like Tivo for the iPod, the **iFill** ($19) software will log on and "record" your chosen internet radio program(s) for later playback on your portable mp3 player. (02) **iGadget** ($29) has plug-ins galore, allowing diverse PDA-like uses, like contacts, movie theater schedules, driving instructions, etc. Printing a list of the iPod's songs and transferring its contents back to your PC are other great features. (03) The **tempo Armband** ($24) is much more comfortable than the Action Jacket. (04) The **Wireless DJ** ($249) is a revolutionary step in the future's direction, integrating your computer's digital music library with your stereo. Audio applications (like iTunes, WMP, Musicmatch Jukebox, Rhapsody) are controlled by the handheld remote control, which features a nice interface/screen with a clickable scroll wheel. (05) The **iTrip Auto** ($69) trumps all previous editions, plugging into the bottom dock connector and charging it while playing. (06) **Oxyride Batteries** ($4) simply have a longer life for high demand devices like digital cameras, etc. *DV*

[griffintechnology.com, purpleghost.com, logitech.com, panasonic.com]

Skillet
GETTING AGGRESSIVE

BY KELLY BENSON

"DUDE, THAT'S TIGHT!" THIS IS WHAT I HEARD THE MAJORITY OF MY FLIGHT FROM THE DRY HEAT OF TEXAS TO THE DAMP HUMIDITY OF ILLINOIS. AFTER MY CHAP STICK WAS CONFISCATED AT THE WILLIAM P. HOBBY AIRPORT IN HOUSTON, I FOUND MY SEAT NEXT TO A YOUNG MAN THAT FELT IT NECESSARY TO GO THROUGH THE ENTIRE SKY MALL CATALOGUE AND TELL ME EVERYTHING HE THOUGHT WAS "TIGHT." BRUSHED NICKEL FOG-FREE SHOWER MIRROR? TIGHT. WORLD'S LARGEST CROSSWORD PUZZLE? TIGHT. SEVERAL TIMES I TUNED HIM OUT AND TRIED TO FOCUS ON MY QUINCY, ILLINOIS DESTINATION WHERE I WOULD MEET UP WITH SKILLET BEFORE THEIR HEADLINING SHOW AT SHOUTFEST. AS I GAZED OUT MY WING SIDE WINDOW, I COULDN'T HELP BUT THINK OF THE MOVIE ALMOST FAMOUS AND WAS TEMPTED TO INTERRUPT MY EASILY ENTERTAINED FRIEND TO SEE IF HE WANTED TO JOIN ME IN A RENDITION OF ELTON JOHN'S "TINY DANCER." FIGURING HE WOULDN'T KNOW THE TUNE AND NOT WANTING TO RUIN HIS FUN, I SETTLED INTO THE FLIGHT THAT WOULD GET ME A LITTLE CLOSER TO SKILLET'S TOUR BUS DOOR..

After safely landing in St. Louis, I propelled down I-70 in an orange Dodge Cavalier toward Quincy. I arrived at Shoutfest around 4pm and stepped out into the globally warmed summer air. Smiling faces met me at the front gate and escorted me to a long line of tour buses containing many of that day's acts. Having an hour to kill, I took in the sights and sounds of the festival, which was well populated with eager music lovers.

As 5 o'clock rolled around I shook hands with John and Kory Cooper and sunk into the black vinyl benches of their previously hockey-team-owned tour bus. Bound by tattooed wedding rings, a love for Christ and a love for each other, John and Kory began talking about what going mainstream has done for Skillet and how the band has grown because of it. On the cusp of their second mainstream album, the band has learned a lot from being a part of the Christian and secular music markets. But what does going mainstream really mean?

"Why did you have to ask that?" John laughs. "When I say it, really all that I mean…"

"Broadening our audience," Kory cuts in.

"Yeah, going with a secular label, whatever that means, you know and, and that can, business-wise can get your record in general market stores. Um, so I guess maybe I will be clear about some boundaries that I know that I have that I don't consider going mainstream. For instance, part of going mainstream for me will never be not doing Christian shows, you know, and not doing Christian festivals, being in Christian magazines. There are some Christian bands that that's what that means, but that's not the case for Skillet and it won't be the case for us. It sounds really stupid but some people wonder if you're still a Christian and uh, do you still have the same faith you have and…absolutely! And it sounds ridiculous but some people ask." John chuckles at his last statement but since 2004's *Collide* was released in both the Christian market and on major label Lava Records, the band has a new understanding of what people expect from them.

Photo: Jeff Gros

"It's like, you're not Christian enough for some Christians and maybe you're too Christian for some of the non-Christians," John explains. "Christians will be like, why didn't you guys do a message…"

"Why didn't you guys do an altar call in your 20-minute set?" Kory adds.

John further explains, "We'll play for 25 minutes, you know, our job is to open up for a band and do a really great job getting a crowd ready for them, who's gonna spend that talking about Jesus and never get asked to come back?"

Kory nods her agreement and adds, "And as if that's the most effective way to reach them anyway. When you're in the Christian world solely, you know, some of the way to go is, you do the alter call, they come forward. Is that the most effective way in a world where they don't even know what that is? They're used to the band saying 'f-you' and everything else and not being positive and you come up there being positive. Does that have more of an impact for the Kingdom in the long run? Well, we think it does."

"A lot of Christians have never really seen that world at all, like myself. And, uh, I have an extra amount of grace for these people," John admits. "I don't think a lot of people know what happens at a rock show in the world. I tell people, I'm like, if you went to Ozzfest, and saw all these bands like Korn play and then saw P.O.D. play and even if P.O.D. doesn't say anything about God the whole show, never mentions it. It's a big, big difference."

"And that crowd notices a difference. Telling women to respect themselves and put their tops back on, like that's unheard of," replies Kory.

"Yeah, that's so edgy!" John exclaims. "The fact that you're not doing those things sets you apart in a major, major way. And I think a lot of Christians are like, that's not an effort, and it's like, yeah you probably should have been there because you don't know how awesome it is." That might be hard for Skillet fans to grasp as they were birthed into the Christian market unlike P.O.D. who had gone mainstream at the beginning of their popularity.

But Skillet has been battling the Christian music world for the span of their ten-year career. Since '96 they consistently put out records and were nominated for Dove awards and each year they were shut down by the next big thing in Christian music. Although this frustrated the band, they never felt the need to appeal to the scenester crowd. John explains, "I don't think we could ever be a hipster band. It's not what we do. And the truth is I have yet to like any of that music that has come out. I hated ska, I thought ska was the worst thing that happened to rock music ever. The rap rock thing took me a long time to get. Um, and now all the new hipster bands, I just don't get it. I'm not saying they're not good but, like, Panic! At the Disco or these bands that just come out and BAM! they're just the biggest thing. I guess what I'm saying is that I don't feel the need to be those bands because I know it would be so disingenuous and it's some of the only music I don't like. I love hard music, I love really pop music; I don't like scenster music."

Being the "in" thing comes with a high price, usually longevity, and that's one thing Skillet is able to boast they have. Despite several lineup changes over the years, John and Kory feel blessed to be playing with drummer Lori Peters and guitarist Ben Kasica. Kory, searching for the right words explains, "John is Skillet. The rest of us are just expendable and we're aware of that. It's a humbling position to be in but it's good, you know, cause you're here to serve John and his vision so…finding people that are okay with that is hard to do and we are blessed with people like that. Ben and Lori are that person."

John, shifts uncomfortably in his seat and replies, "Yeah, just so you know, I've never had a conversation with the band telling them they're expendable." At this he and Kory laugh and clarify that because Skillet has been John's vision for so long he basically writes everything. Talking with Ben and Lori, they realize this has made them better musicians over the years. On Skillet's seventh album, *Comatose*, Lori ventures into the world of double kicks and Ben learns the art of shredding. Ben explains, "I kinda missed the whole 80s era of guitar playing so, honestly it was really new to me. I'd done a little of it before but, uh, like John had kinda mentioned before recording that that was what he was thinking and I'm like, 'How am I going to do that?' So, that was a challenge going into recording because I knew I had to play like that by the end or they would have to get someone else to do it. So, I had to work like, my butt off."

Making a record for a major label allowed Skillet to stretch their sound in ways they never thought they could. Playing with the LA Symphony on a few tracks and having an A&R guy to work with pushed the band to new heights. Lori adds, "I've always loved John's writing. I always think he writes really good songs. But I think, on the last album and really on this album (*Comatose*) he really found himself as a songwriter. So, maybe it's just working with different people that stretched him. I think this is the most solid record as far as songs go."

Hearing the four veterans praise each other's unique abilities, it became clear that they see each other as family. That family atmosphere was reinforced as we counted down the hours before show time. John and Kory's four-year-old daughter hopped around the bus announcing her "poopy" and firing off the fruits of the spirit at rapid speed while Kory made me coffee and John tried to contain his excitement for the upcoming show. The family element negates any threat of usual tour bus antics and Skillet's pre-show time is usually spent watching *Friends* and being extremely health conscious. All four members boast a love of working out from Ben's latest Tai Bo venture to Lori's…um…well, we'll just call it choreographed dance kickboxing with a jazzy twist.

As dark clouds closed in and the threat of rain became more apparent John sang, "Aw man, I hope we get to play. I want to do some rock and roll!" emphasizing the "roll" with a mock falsetto and a raised fist. Unfortunately, the festival was shut down 30 minutes before Skillet was supposed to take the stage with face melting force. Disappointed, the band went out to meet faithful fans who braved the impending storm in hopes of an autograph.

As I said my goodbyes and walked back to my ridiculously bright rental car, I felt grateful to have met such nice people. A band that doesn't always get the credit they deserve but have managed to out run other flash-in-the-pan acts with dedication to the calling God has put on their lives. Now that's "tight."

✖

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SOUL P.

BY BRENTEN GILBERT

JUDGING BY THE PUBLICITY PHOTOS, ONE MIGHT ASSUME THAT SOUL P IS LIVING THE GOOD LIFE. DRESSED WELL AND SURROUNDED BY FANS AND SPOTLIGHTS, SOUL APPEARS WITHOUT A CARE IN THE WORLD. BELOW THE SURFACE HOWEVER, THE BACKSTORY OF THIS LATEST ADDITION TO BEATMART RECORDINGS DOESN'T READ WITH GLAMOUR AND GLITZ.

Separated from his mother at the age of three when she was jailed, a family friend immediately adopted Soul, but his situation didn't improve. "I was raised during the 80s in an area called Yesler Terrace," says Soul, "a neighborhood infested with drugs and gangs." In fact, his new father was a well-known drug dealer.

At a young age, Soul poured himself into sports and his schoolwork to find refuge from the trouble around him, but eventually the pressure was too much and the world around him laid a claim on his life. "Around the age of ten, I started understanding the [activities] around me," says Soul. "By 11 or 12, I started smoking weed and stealing money and marijuana from my home." One thing led to another and his life began to fall apart. Says Soul, "I stopped being an honor roll student. I stopped playing [sports] and spent all my time running the streets." This life quickly spiraled downward, landing him in jail at the age of thirteen.

After a little over 7 months in jail, Soul sought a better life and decided to move in with his mother – now sober and married in Portland, Oregon. "I thought, 'I won't get [into] trouble in Portland when I'm not with my friends'," says Soul. Unfortunately, this wasn't the case. "The drug spot was right around the corner from my house," he explains. "So I ended up being involved with the gangs and selling drugs again."

Soul spent the next few years coming in and out of juvenile detention programs, continuing in this dangerous lifestyle, eventually caught in the crossfire. "[Even] after I got shot, I still didn't learn," says Soul, "I was still hanging out on the street. I had just spent five months in a group home environment because of drug charges, but about a month later, I sold more drugs and got caught again." This time, he faced up to eight years in prison.

Granted something of a reprieve, Soul headed to boot camp for further rehabilitation after serving just nine months. At the boot camp, with the help of a visiting minister, Soul's life began to change for the better. "From a young age, I believed in God," says Soul, "but I had very little understanding about Him."

In 1998, less than twenty-four hours after he was released from boot camp, Soul attended a youth program at a local church at the request of his mother. "I really didn't want to go," says Soul, "but as part of God's plan, I got up and went." The service included a group who used rap music to share the message of Christ. "I never knew that [anybody] rapped in church," he states. "I didn't think they allowed that." Through rap music, Soul had made a connection with the church, got plugged into the youth group and gave his life to Christ.

As time went on, Soul recorded his music, releasing *Acts 29* with two other emcees (Braille and Ohmega Watts) on Syntax Records in 2002 and *Simply Soul*, an independent solo debut album in 2003. However, just as things started to look up, Soul was faced with a proverbial thorn in his flesh, one that would lead him astray once again.

Having left the church due to politics that he didn't agree with, Soul found his way back to the street. "In 2004, I got away from the church and got back into trouble with the law because of drugs," he explains. Even in the midst of that difficult situation however, it was clear that God was at work in his life. "It was a real eye-opener that got me right back on track," says Soul. "It could've been [a two-year sentence], but fortunately, I was released on a 30-day work release and a year of probation." He continues, "It brought everything into perspective, showing how the enemy can slide into your life and destroy it if you fall back into your old ways."

During this brief relapse and recovery process, Soul rediscovered the power of God's grace and forgiveness. "It was after all the court cases," he shares, "that's when I got the call from Todd Collins about wanting to sign me." For Soul, it was a clear confirmation that God still had a plan for him. "It reminded me that God is always faithful," he explains. "He can turn a bad situation into a good situation."

And now it's 2006. On the heels of the release of his second independent solo album, *The Soul Affect*, Soul P finalized a deal with Beatmart Recordings and is currently set to release *The Premiere* on December 26th. With a commercial feel to the beats and the street-smart lyrics built from years of experience, the album is sure to have a positive impact in the market. Says Soul, "I have an opportunity to minister to the world by sharing what [God's] done for me and what He can do for others." He continues, "[we can't] keep looking to the past all the time, because the future is bright."

✖

BEATS

[**hip-hop** news 'n' reviews by SphereofHipHop. com]

News shorts…

Mr. J of **The Procussions** just dropped a new song dealing with the black market sex trade. **Constance** is quite possibly one of the most important hip-hop tracks to drop in 2006. Please give the song and the message of the song your attentive ear. You can listen at SphereofhiphopMP3. com. (theprocussions.com)

Look for a special 3-part video series featuring the 'making of' the new **Ajax Starglider** video. The series highlights the life of a homeless video director and a middle class struggling artist. (myspace.com/ajax-starglider)

Sintax the terrific + **JustMe** = EP
Both of these fine wordsmiths have teamed up to record a special EP. What makes it special? Well, they recorded it and that makes it special. We know you will like it. We hope to have a small sound sample up soon. But for now, we would suggest checking out these pages for some raps: Myspace.com/justmee + Myspace.com/sintaxtheterrific

ILLECT Recordings has been putting in time filming some videos. **Ajax** (as mentioned) has been filming some videos for Middle Class Artisan record. Two are currently finished and another in production. **JustMe** filmed a video for his "Latenight Lullaby" track off of his *One Man's Trash* release. **Cookbook & Uno Mas** film a video soon for their single "Trash Can Bingo." Lastly, look for a video drop from the **Lojique** crew as well. (illect.com)

Othello's album *Alive At The Assembly Line*, is out now, exclusively in Japan, on MicLife Records. Look for this release to hit the USA and other countries later this fall. (sphereofhiphop.com)

Rawkus Entertainment recording artist **The Procussions** will be embarking on a cross country tour with legendary hip-hop outfit **A Tribe Called Quest**. (theprocussions.com)

Gotta check these releases out…
Grits [TBA, 11.21.06]
ill-Day *It's Our Fault*
Othello *Alive At The Assembly Line*
Malachi Perez *Love & Handgrenades*
Freddie Bruno *Hold Music*
Phonetic Composition *All Smiles*
Ajax *Starglider* EP
Lojique *Process of Illumination* remixed
Sintax the terrific *Curb Appeal*
Beat Rabbi & Deepspace5 *Deepspace5oul*
Braille *Box of Rhymes*
Theory Hazit *Extra Credit*
Braille, Ohmega Watts, Surreal & DJ Idull *4 Days In Geneva*
Sharlok Poems *Blooming Sounds*
RedCloud *Hawthorne's Most Wanted*
Dirt *(Shadow of the Locust) Heavy Manners*
Sivion *Mood Enhancement* remixes
Shai Linne *Storiez*
Freddie Bruno Hold Music

Disciple

WE ARE FINDING WHO WE AR

BY DOUG VAN PELT

IF SOMEONE REALLY WANTED TO MAKE A MOVIE ABOUT CHRISTIAN ROCK, THEY WOULD DO WELL TO DOCUMENT THE BAND DISCIPLE. A TRIO OF FRIENDS FROM KNOXVILLE, TENNESSEE SET OUT TO MAKE METAL FOR GOD MORE THAN TEN YEARS AGO AND THEY'VE SUCCESSFULLY PRESSED ON, ESCHEWING TRENDS, FACING HAIRCUTS LIKE TRAUMATIC MOMENTS, ADDING A BASS PLAYER TO FREE UP A BUNDLE-OF-ENERGY FRONTMAN, AND... OH YEAH, THERE'S THE TOURING. THIS BAND HAS TAKEN THE BITTER MEDICINE OF STAYING ON THE ROAD ALMOST EVERY SINGLE DAY OF THEIR ADULT LIVES.

And last year wasn't too bad for the band – releasing arguably its best album ever, charting three #1 Christian radio singles and an award for the #1 Christian rock song of the year with "The Wait Is Over." The band chalked up its fifth and sixth Dove Award nominations, and "Rise Up" became the official theme song for the NBA's Atlanta Hawks. Somehow the band managed to record another album with rising star Travis Wyrick, aptly title *Scars Remain*.

"We all really enjoyed recording this album," explains vocalist Kevin Young. "It's amazing to be able look back and see how much you've grown musically and spiritually, and I think that's what makes this album so special. We always try to write songs that we like and it's interesting how what we like is always changing. Our albums usually are very different than the one before it. I would say that is definitely the case with this album as well."

This is an understatement when describing their coming-of-age self-titled album in 2005, which probably freaked out a lot of their older fans with its emo-friendly guitars and catchy choruses. All the fans they won over last year on the road with Kutless might in turn freak out over the heavy and pounding rhythms they churn back out with a battle cry song like "Game On." This potential reaction is not lost on the band, that's for sure. "We don't try to be harder or more melodic, we just try to write songs that we like, and this time the songs ended up being a lot harder. One of the things I like is that the majority of the songs are going to be really fun to play live, like 'Scars Remain,' 'Game On,' 'Someone,' 'Fight For Love,' and the first single, 'Regime Change.' We have always been a touring band, so it is good to have songs that we enjoy playing live and I believe these songs are going to be great crowd songs."

* * *

How did these songs get written? Please elaborate on the songwriting process for these particular songs.

"Musically it was definitely a collaboration. Brad (Noah) usually always lays the foundation for most of the songs (on guitar), and then we just start to build on top of that. You can really see the fingerprints of everyone in the band in every song. Joey (Fife) had a lot of great ideas that started 'Regime Change.' 'After The World' was a song that I wrote the music for in my head while we were in an airport one day. The song that really was a team effort was 'Dive.' Each song is different, and the process was different (for each): from sitting at Brad's house with an acoustic guitar to sitting on the back of the bus writing riffs. One of the important things that we have tried to do over the last few years is make sure that every song has a big chorus, and then write around that. So, most of the times the chorus is written before anything else, but sometimes it isn't.

"When it came down to the lyrics for this album I felt like I didn't know what to write about this time around, because sometimes you reach a place where you feel like you've already written a song about everything. I remember praying, 'God, what do you want to say to the world today?' It seemed after I prayed that prayer the lyrics really started to happen, and the choruses began to form in the songs."

What sort of things are you guys wanting to say lyrically?

"We have always wanted to write songs that point to Jesus. Whether we write about a personal experience, or some random topic, we want our music to bring hope to someone's life. We have seen the gospel of Christ transform so many lives over the last decade, and it is our desire to continue to share that gospel in a relevant way."

Why? What made you write about this or that?

"This is who we are. I think the power of being an artist is that you share 'art' from your perspective. The best art is created when someone is true to who they are. If we tried to be something that we are not, people would be able to see through it and know that we weren't for real. That is why I have a lot of respect for artists who are true to themselves even if they share a negative message, because they simply are being themselves and not trying to be someone else for whatever reason. Jesus is our life. We would not only be cheating our listeners by not writing about Him, but we would even more be cheating ourselves."

Disciple has been known as a "ministry band" and has built a reputation for "bringing it" in concert (with the "it" being the Word of God and preaching/sharing). While that used to be common, it doesn't happen so much anymore these days. Why do you think that is? What do you think about that?

"I don't know why that is. It doesn't bother me at all. Like I said before, I really appreciate when people are themselves and there are countless bands who don't preach from the stage, but have a sincere relationship with God and want God to use their band to touch people's lives. I used to have a different opinion in my younger days, but after seeing firsthand a lot of Godly men in this industry that don't feel a call to speak from the stage, my opinion has changed. Matt from Spoken is a great example. He doesn't preach from the stage, but you would be hard pressed to find a man in the music industry with as much integrity as he has."

What are some of the bands you've either played with or made friends with that you respect the most? Why?

"I have a lot of respect for the guys in Kutless. They are the same off stage as they are on stage. And I have been able to see their integrity firsthand. I would say another band I feel that way about is Poor Man's Riches. Blindside is a band that I have a lot of respect for. We met them in Germany last December, and they really had no idea who we were. But they treated us like they had known us for years and really influenced me on how I want to personally treat other bands that we tour with."

When you look around at the music scene, what do you see? What do you wish you saw? What do you see that you like/dislike?

"The music scene is always changing. I like where music is right now. It seems that there are so many styles out there right now that a band actually has the freedom to be themselves. In the past there has always been a trendy dominant music style that everyone seemed to have fall in that category to try to be successful, but now it feels like there is a freedom from that."

In an age where it can seem hard to find a person of faith that you'd actually enjoy hanging with, this band is a most welcome guest.

✖

Robert Randolph
& THE FAMILY BAND

BY DAN MACINTOSH

ROBERT RANDOLPH IS AN EXTRAORDINARY ROCK PEDAL STEEL PLAYER, AND YOU CAN'T SAY THAT ABOUT TOO MANY OTHER ARTISTS. SURE, THERE ARE PEDAL STEEL PROS UNDER EVERY ROCK IN NASHVILLE, BUT FEW OF THESE MUSICIANS TRULY ROCK, AND EVEN FEWER ARE BLACK LIKE RANDOLPH. HIS SKILLS HAVE PROMPTED SUPERSTARS LIKE ERIC CLAPTON AND DAVE MATTHEWS TO TAKE THIS UNIQUE MAN ON TOUR WITH THEM; THEY RECOGNIZED HIS GREATNESS FROM THE VERY GET-GO.

Randolph's new release, *Colorblind*, is a flat out wondrous rock album, which – much like the artist himself – is difficult to categorize stylistically. He can rock out like Lenny Kravitz, as evidenced by the opener "Ain't Nothing Wrong with That," and then become bluesy and soulful, as he does -- along with special guest Eric Clapton -- during "Jesus Is Just Alright with me." Randolph doesn't create black or white music, and this makes him colorblind in the best possible way.

"I really wanted to get people back in tune with music just being about a celebration," Randolph explains when describing his new work. "When you think about the term "colorblind musical artists," you think about artists like Stevie Wonder, Michael Jackson, Al Green, The Beatles, and all that kind of thing. As a young, African American artist, I wanted to get rock music back to that kind of a deal."

Sadly, if you're an African American musician these days, people often immediately assume that you're somehow connected to the hip-hop world. Not that there's anything wrong with hip-hop, per se, but this assumed association must sometimes cause at least a little frustration for the ever-eclectic Randolph. "99 out of 100 times, if I'm on an airplane, most people go, 'Wow, you must be into music! You're a rapper, huh?"

In addition to touring with rock music's A-list, Randolph was equally blessed when many of these same folks also helped him create his most recent full-length. In fact, Eric Clapton mixed in a little career advice – especially with regard to career longevity -- along with his musical expertise. "Me and Eric Clapton actually became close in 2004 when we (The Family Band) toured the whole world with him," Randolph recalls. "At that time, I had a chance to really sit down with him and go over so many different musical ideas and just talk about his history in music and my background. For this (new) record, he really wanted to have some input and really helped me out with a lot of the stuff that I was doing; to help me become one of these artists that is around for years and years to come."

While Clapton's input was career-building, as much as it was musical, Steven Tyler (Aerosmith) was more instrumental in setting the overall celebratory mood of this disc. "Steve Tyler really influenced the first song on there, "Ain't Nothing Wrong with That,"" Randolph explains. "He wanted me to get into this kind of party vibe and really have the guitar in the front and get something that's rock & roll. It feels urban and it feels fresh, but it's kind of like a celebration at the same time."

"He (Tyler) had this example of an old song by The Pretty Things, an old English band from the 60s," Randolph continues. "He had this song that was called "Don't Bring Me Down." It was this big, party kind of thing that he wanted me to visit. Once we got into that mode, we started to look into my gospel background, and then you've got the New Orleans thing. So we kind of wanted to hone that into a one-time deal, and just go."

The song "Angels" is another track that carries special meaning for Randolph. Its overall sound was strongly inspired by producer Daniel Lanois, who obviously knows a thing or two about creating atmospheric recordings. Dave Matthews, however, helped Randolph with its lyrical focus. "Musically, it was a song about this atmospheric guitar kind of sound that was really influenced by me hanging out with Daniel Lanois a lot," Randolph recalls. "It sounds like this swirling guitar riff, and it sounds like love. Me and Dave were able to sit down and just talk about how sometimes when you're down and out, you say, 'Lord, please help me.' It's not complete until the good Lord sends you a beautiful woman who comes and picks you up, because as men we can be sorry. Now that I've got this woman and the good Lord is in my life," Randolph summarizes its lyric, "here I am believing in angels! But before, I was down and out. He (Matthews) really helped me capture a lot of those lines and really get a sense of what we were trying to do in that song."

Randolph wants to be known as a singer of songs, just as much as he is recognized for his instrumental prowess. His mad pedal steel skills are beyond question, but it should be noted that there are also some mighty fine songs on Colorblind. This serious goal of becoming a performer of songs, in addition to naturally making musical sparks fly, was something Randolph considered deeply while creating this new work.

"Before we started this album, (my primary role of being an instrumentalist) was the mentality: of just, like, a musician, first. Just a guitar player," he admits. "But as time went on, we started to develop. Going back to talking with people like Rick Rubin, Eric Clapton, and Santana: when you have these songs and you really sit down and hone in on these ideas and create the atmospheres for these songs, it gives you a chance to go out there and perform and really play the best guitar you can play around the songs and really come into your own as an artist. It allows you to be around for years and years to come."

It took a while for Randolph to adjust to all of

the star quality that suddenly surrounded him. But many of these rock old-timers could see how Randolph was adding new flavors to rock's table. Perhaps he could even teach some of these old dogs a few new tricks.

"It was weird at first," Randolph admits. "Those guys have been around in the best times of rock & roll music, when everything was just getting invented. So for them to come see me play and hear that now I've created a whole new thing for them to look to and maybe something to feed off of, they really find it really intriguing and really want to get in and help me out. Those guys really care about keeping real rock alive and really having something new and fresh to offer, just to keep it going."

Randolph's strong Christian faith cannot help but rub off on these celebrated stars at times. "That's kind of what it's about," he says. "What a lot of people forget is… people forget how they got to be a Christian, and where they were before that. So I like to, basically, always remind people of the steps that are always out there; those tribulations. But for me, there's light for everybody. We should all pick each other up. Because, at the end of the day, the only judge is God. You got one guy over here believing one thing; the other guy over there is believing another thing. And everybody's a firm believer at the end of the day. The good Lord is the judge, and He's the one that says, 'Hey, you can enter the gates now.' For me musically, through music and through songwriting and all that, and even going out and performing, I always like to keep that with me for people so I can influence somebody else who doesn't know the first step about how to be a better person; how to become a Christian."

It's not uncommon for musicians and/or fans to sense that Randolph has a deep faith. "Some people who don't know (about my beliefs) will come to the show and they'll feel some kind of a free kind of a religious experience, like they've been in church or something. People come and see that and they feel that, so a lot of times I do get into these (spiritual) conversations with people."

Even though Randolph has worked with some amazing musicians over the years, there are still many talented people he has yet to collaborate with. "I would love to do something with Stevie Wonder soon," he says. "Him and Prince would probably be my two. Younger guys would probably be, like, Jack White. Yeah, he's a great guitar player, that guy. That'd be fun working with him."

While this proposed Jack White collaboration makes modern music fans' mouths water, Randolph is equally ever mindful of the pioneers that came before him. "I use a lot these older influences and whatnot, and kind of made sure that I had something in this record all the time to remind people of maybe Stevie Wonder, or maybe Sly Stone, maybe Hendrix at times."

Randolph is fast becoming a marquee name, although he's not yet in the same category of these rock legends he's befriended. One of the best methods in preventing big-headed-ness is keeping family members around. Smartly, he still calls his group The Family Band -- and with good reason: He has actual family members touring with him.

"I got my cousin on drums, another cousin on bass. My sister sings a lot with us, and wrote some of the songs with us. She's there from time to time. So there's a lot of people in my family, too, who help me write songs. It's been like that since the beginning. We grew up in church all playing together. Our family reunions were big kind of jam sessions, where everybody comes and sings and plays an instrument." Like all true families, Randolph and his musician/family members sometimes get into arguments. "It's easier to deal with family quarrels," he says, "than with people who are not family."

Through his friendships with the likes of Clapton, Tyler, and Santana, Randolph's expanding musical family is growing in leaps and bounds. You'd never know it from talking to him, however, because he comes off so darn humble! He's smart and talented, it's true, but he's not quite omniscient yet. After all, this big sports fan from New Jersey actually believes the Knicks are going to be good next year. Such a subjective belief can't help but make him even more humble.

Randolph's talent is amazing, but his efforts to incite musical, cultural and spiritual colorblindness might ultimately become his greatest legacy. Just be glad this young man has taken the unusual path of putting his pedal to the metal, so to speak, and given us so much one-of-a-kind music.

✖

CIRCUS DAWN

BETWEEN THE LINES OF GRAY

This band from Chi-town has shown so much growth in such a short time, it's amazing. Somehow they've been able to bridle their gothic, industrial, and nu metal influences and show real restraint for the sake of a good song. Weaving several moods, textures and dynamics into their songs, it will reveal more of itself with repeated listens. The minor effort involved in pulling this shy band out of its shell is well worth it. [YOUNGSIDE] DOUG VAN PELT

TY TABOR

ROCK GARDEN

Ty Tabor has been the melodic soul of King's X for nearly twenty years now. While primarily demonstrated in his permanently innovative guitar style (seemingly influenced by everything from The Beatles, Hendrix and Zappa to Cobain, Thayill and Corgan), Tabor has also been an important vocal ingredient in the massive King's X sound. All of his gifts; musical, lyrical and compositional, are on fine display on his latest solo joint, *Rock Garden*. Years in the making, the songs selected for *Rock Garden* are flawless. The opener "Ride" threatens to sound like a King's X song but quickly veers into a sweeping classic rock romp. "Stalker" deals with the all-too-common story of rock star obsessives head on with clever lyrics and a great spooky screamed chorus. "I Know What I'm Missing" slows things down a bit with the saddest (and most tripped out) song on the disc. "Afraid" almost humorously confesses and "Beautiful Sky" gets all psychedelic and swirly. "She's A Tree" ventures into classic power-pop territory with one of the best lyrics of the set. And so it continues; diverse, imaginative, challenging, uplifting and impressive. Tabor's voice isn't textbook rock perfection. What he lacks in swagger he makes up for in sensibility and somehow despite his firm foundation in 70s classic rock it sounds like no one in the history of rock and roll could have written these songs or played them. That he isn't a household name in rock and roll history is a tragedy indeed. But for those who have ears to hear, Ty Tabor is making some of the best rock and roll around. [INSIDE OUT] JOHN J. THOMPSON

OTHER DESERT CITIES

ON THE VERGE OF COLLAPSING

Former Merbabies crooner C. Charles Bowden seemed to have fallen off the face of the earth after creating his Other Desert Cities debut in 2002, but a four- year wait has yielded *On the Verge of Collapsing*; a sophomore effort from the band. While still embracing the Wilco comparisons of the debut, this new record experiments a bit more; using horns, violin, banjo, lap steel and various guitar effects to produce a sound reminiscent of Damien Jurado or Magnolia Electric Company. A somewhat dark record, chronicling the story of a man who loses his wife in a car wreck, *On the Verge*… takes the listener through the valley of loss and mourning ("These Things Happen", "Heavy Waters"), but also hints at the healing that will eventually take place.("Recovery", "Heaven Bound Train"). So when life has got you down, and you need a friend to cry with, make sure you bring along this emotional soundtrack – you'll both be better off for it. [VELVET BLUE] DOUG GIESBRECHT

WILDERNESS OF TEKOA

THE SKIES PALE IN COMPARISON

For the band Wilderness of Tekoa, their debut album, *The Skies Pale in Comparison*, is a very nice first effort. Abstract and thought provoking lyrics make one ponder, which only add to the excellent music they give you for 12 tracks. Very neatly put together, the record sounds great and not over-produced, as sometimes happens these days with alt rock. Track one, "Elevate," is slightly reminiscent of Coldplay with some piano driven lyrics, while track two, "Poetry," has a little U2 vibe just to start you off. Throughout the album there are bits and pieces of everything musically. "Your Place in the Ground" is a vocal and piano piece – very intense in its simplicity and lyrical content, a true winner in my eyes. These guys are clearly willing to experiment and it turns out so well. You can tell this is their first album, but that is in no way a bad thing, these guys can probably only get better and I can't wait to hear their next album. [NORTHERN] BONNIE MASRI

THE DIVINE ROMANCE

YOU'RE ALREADY DEAD

A quickly-paced tour through the landscapes of all of the things that fans of modern hardcore crave: Chaotic, discordant riffs, made-for-the-pit breakdowns, a line or two here and there of melodic singing, and the obligatory Dan Weyandt-style, viper-like vocals. It's obvious that the band can hold its own on the battlefield, but it feels as if they are simply paying tribute to the giants of their genre (Zao, Norma Jean) rather than trying to carve out their own identity. Intentions aside, this is a well-produced, finely executed, well-played record that though covering well-traveled ground displays a lot of heart and promise. [HARVEST EARTH RECORDS] CHRIS FRANCZ

TODAY FOREVER

THE NEW PATHETIC

I will admit it, it has been a long time since I have put a CD labeled anything "hardcore" in my computer, but Today Forever's new effort, *The New Pathetic*, chastised me for that little slip up. When the music started I could tell I was in for a treat, some good ole eclectic hardcore. Always a devoted fan of Blindside, this album reminded me of the Swedish boys in quite a few ways – only these guys are German. Blindside was always the master of transitioning between hardcore screaming, ethereal music, and everything in between; this band does so as well, and they happen to be pretty good at it, too. The title track, "The New Pathetic," is a surprise, pretty and moving in an atmospheric way, all instrumental and reminiscent of Hopesfall. The other 13 tracks offer a wonderful mix of everything one could want and ever need in an album. [STRIKE FIRST] BONNIE MASRI

PHIL JOEL

THE DELIBERATE PEOPLE

I'll be honest and blunt: I'm shocked that I like this album. I'm just not a fan of the formulaic and predictable pop drivel produced by the Newsboys. Granted, Steve Taylor helped coax a few good hooks outta the band, but I'll pass. I expect more of the same from the bass player's third solo album – or, even worse, schmaltzy CCM pop. What I got midway through (after a polite and generous listen past some bland pop) was some brilliant songs with a tender falsetto that actually pulled me in. Whoa, Nelly! I'm hearing art! I expected propaganda, and I'm getting something I can actually listen to and enjoy. I have to stop writing and spend a moment beside myself, because what I've just said makes me kind of dizzy. [INDELIBLE/WORD] DOUG VAN PELT

Ratings

	DV	Writer
Circus Dawn *Between The Lines Of Gray*	03	
Ty Tabor *Rock Garden*	03	04
Other Desert Cities *On The Verge Of Collapsing*	03	03*
Wilderness Of Tekoa *The Skies Pale In Comparison*	04	03
The Divine Romance *You're Already Dead*	03	02*
Today Forever *The New Pathetic*	03	04
Phil Joel *The Deliberate People*	02*	

THE LEAD
HARDCORE FOR JESUS
The title *Burn This Record* (one of five releases in this comprehensive 2-disc re-issue) has a whole different meaning in today's music scene. While much of this is sloppy and trashy, it's classic old school punk rock from an unlikely trio that feature a volume-mad guitarist, an in-the-pocket fast drummer, and a great female sometimes-vocalist on bass. If you ever wondered what "Jesus Punk" would sound like, look no further. [RETROACTIVE] DOUG VAN PELT

SEVENTH STAR
100% (DVD)
Like The Chariot DVD, this is a hilarious "inside the van" documentary of hardcore sluggers Seventh Star, with plenty of live music moments, of course. Fast editing and wind-buffeted mics detract, but it's fun. [FACEDOWN] DOUG VAN PELT

MORTIFICATION
LIVE PLANETARIUM (DVD)
Thanks, Rowe, for re-releasing these classic videos on DVD. This live concert captured the classic lineup of Sherlock, Rowe, Carlisle at the huge Blackstump Festival. Shot with brilliant lighting and multiple cameras, this is larger than life grindcore, baby! [ROWE] DOUG VAN PELT

IONA
LIVE IN LONDON (DVD)
Gorgeous lighting, fantastic songs that cover most of their career (with recent tunes getting the most weight), an "on" performance, and full 5.1 Surround Sound mix make this an Iona fan's dream. [FACEDOWN] DOUG VAN PELT

APOLOGETIX
HITS: THE ROAD (CD & DVD)
Apologetix is a musical comedy act . . . and they're very good at it. Get past that other notion (that it's a serious attempt at art or competing with what's on the radio). Swinging from retro rock like Jet to the twangin' country of Toby Keith with a fairly polished skill is pretty impressive. Parody can be offensive to artistic taste, but it is its own twisted artform. This live album captures well what they do, and it covers most of their "popular" takes on rock hits. The accompanying DVD, Samson Comes Alive! falls short of the Weird Al variety (where he performs skits as concept videos), but its a nicely shot live concert. No frills and a decent mix. [PARADUDES] DOUG VAN PELT

THE BLUE LETTER
LIMITED-EDITION TOUR RELEASE
Looking for a band that pushes past that stereotypical hardcore sound? Look no further than The Blue Letter. Like a breath of fresh air, funk inspired bass and jazzy drums break up the overused formula that plague so many hardcore bands. Looking for their CD? Well, they haven't officially recorded it yet. They do have a very exclusive Limited-Edition tour release (available at shows) and a split with Guevara labelmates The Gospel Is A Grenade that will make all your hipster friends jealous if you can find it. Named 2006 Best Decapolis Label Showcase Band at Cornerstone Festival in Illinois, I doubt it will take long for The Blue Letter to record an accessable album and see their popularity grow. [GUEVARA ENTERTAINMENT] KELLY BENSON

IN REVERENT FEAR
STOMACHER
When the opening airy vocals of "All Ripe" burst out of the speaker almost like a Middle Eastern call to prayer, it sets the listener up for something of a mellow outing. But don't be fooled. IRF can flip a switch (like in the song "666777888") and scream like any of your favorite hardcore bands. It's the balance between post-whatever rock melodies (with Jarrod Taylor's mesmerizing voice) and their ability to rock that make listening to this album kind of tense. Most of the time we're treated to some really smooth songs that breathe in the air for a long time. Imagine the calming charm of Eric Collins (Denison Marrs) or even Thom Yorke crooning like an instrument. Beautiful songs, stripped away at times and at others complex and layered. This is a band I can dig in several different moods. [ANXIETY] DOUG VAN PELT

VIVA VOCE
GET YR BLOOD SUCKED OUT
On *Get Yr Blood Sucked Out*, Portland's favorite husband wife duo Viva Voce have once again returned to loud raucous guitars built on zoning drums and creative rhythms. With more similarities to their first record *Hurray For Now*, than their previous two, *Lovers Lead the Way* and *The Heat Can Melt Your Brain*, the band has produced a career defining album that holds heavy in the running for one of the best albums of 2006 in my opinion. Songs as dramatic as the record's moniker sonically drill Anita Robinson's incensed guitar tone and agitated riffs driven by Kevin's rhythmical magic deep inside your skull to resonate with pleasure. Even with a heavier more menacing sound Viva Voce still graces these songs with Anita's silky voice to create a haunting effect suitable for the title *Get Yr Blood Sucked Out*. Songs "Believer", "When Planets Collide", "We Do Not (bleep) Around", "Helicopter", and the six-minute massive guitar homage "So Many Miles" serve as more than compelling reasons to get yr blood sucked out. [BARSUK] CHRIS TROUTMAN

JUPITER VI
BACK FROM MARS
After being elusive and obscure from the music scene for the better part of a decade (only sticking his head out like Punxsutawney Phil on *Groundhog Day*, with a Deliverance reunion at Cornerstone in 2001 and a couple of Fearful Symmetry projects) Jimmy Brown has re-emerged with a dandy of a retro rock release that fully embraces his David Bowie inspiration. His low end voice and penchant for hooks makes writing good songs seem so easy. People might split hairs over what "era" of Bowie is being conjured here, but I'm just thrilled to have this guy's music back. His covers of Daniel Amos' "Through The Speakers" and The Kinks' "All Day And All Of The Night" are extra special treats on this full length. [RETROACTIVE] DOUG VAN PELT

WOVENHAND
MOSAIC
Fans of the popular eclectic alternative band 16 Horsepower are definitely familiar with the genius of David Eugene Edwards. The band has developed a loyal following of fans and critics with their unique blend of gothic Americana folk and rock. David's side project Wovenhand has not gotten the same exposure or respect. It has a few similarities to 16 Horsepower, but it's more spiritual and more eclectic. *Mosaic* takes what Wovenhand has done in the past and brings it to a new level. Edwards has finally managed to combine his varied influences of Goth, alternative and Celtic into a brilliantly written and recorded album of deeply spiritual songs that have a middle ages feel to them. There are moments here that sound like Roger Waters from Pink Floyd (in the song "Wintershaker") and other moments that sound like a Mike Oldfield movie soundtrack (the song "Swedish Purse"). Musically there are the baroque organs, Celtic sounding strings, banjos, and lots of other odd instrumentation. It is hard to tell at times how some of the varied sounds were actually created and performed, as this is a very original sounding record. His speak-sing vocal style is reminiscent of Bruce Cockburn at times and can be an acquired taste, but it's never sounded better than it does with these songs. This is an album that immediately conjures images of middle earth, Celtic folklore and gorgeous spiritual themes. I know the hardcore 16 Horsepower fans will take issue with this, but I truly feel *Mosaic* is Edwards' strongest album of his career. Those of you looking for something amazingly artistic and unique (there's not a loud guitar on this album) need to look no further. [SOUNDS FAMILYRE] DR. TONY SHORE

ROBERT RANDOLPH & THE FAMILY BAND

COLORBLIND

For all the kudos, Doves and accolades, anybody familiar with the way *Live at the Wetlands* displayed Randolph's great talents as a pedal steel player, had to be disappointed with his major studio debut, *Unclassified*. Playing a concert in the last days of the notorious Wetlands nightclub, Randolph recreated gospel strains learned in the "sacred steel" tradition of The House of God Church while channeling the inspired soloing and performance style of Stevie Ray Vaughan and *Live at the Fillmore* vintage Allman Bros. It's as if Randolph and his Family Band listened to a bunch of contemporary Christian albums and tried to come up with something that fit that limited understanding of musical possibilities.

While *Unclassified* is by no means a throw-away, it lacks the energy, spirit and soul that is so appealing when Randolph has performed opening sets for the likes of the Dave Matthews Band and The Black Crowes. Playing for mainstream crowds he feels free to dig deep into the funk, climb down inside a blues, and then take a jam riff and soar in the clouds. And, now, thankfully, you can hear the broad, rich stream of talent on Randolph's sophomore studio recording, *Colorblind*.

Backed by his family band cousins, Randolph gets in touch with the soul/funk of Sly Stone (remember he was on stage at the Grammy's for that ill-fated Stone tribute that Sly barely showed up for), and the result is a big sound, full hooky choruses, and strong gospel declarations like "Deliver Me," "Thrill of It," "Thankful N' Thoughtful," and "Homecoming." But that's not the half of it.

Eric Clapton trades licks with Randolph on the Doobie Bros. inspired version of A. Reynold's Byrds' classic, "Jesus Is Just Alright," Leela James gives the soulful blues of "Stronger" a gospel upturn, and DMB's Matthews and horn man Leroi Moore contribute to "Love Is the Only Way." That last thought pretty much sums up Randolph's message throughout this disc. God is love, God is throwing a party that you're not going to want to miss, and this is the soundtrack. This music, Randolph's best so far, makes that invitation all the more palpable. ~~[WARNER BROS.] BRIAN QUINCY NEWCOMB~~

DESTROY THE RUNNER

SAINTS

Familiar sounds can breed contempt, but new band Destroy the Runner is only taking familiar sounds and twisting them into their own brand of screamo. The dynamic between their heaviness, progressive playing, and sing-along choruses is powerful and effective.
~~[SOLID STATE] DOUG VAN PELT~~

KNOCKOUT KINGS

THE KID'S GOT HEART!

The Fort Worth fivesome that make up the Knockout Kings decided to keep their punk ethos alive by releasing yet another EP (their third). Entitled *The Kid's Got Heart*, the five songs fact check Taking Back Sunday by erupting emo explosions, expedient shreds, and curt screams. But it's the melodic ferocity that melts with the lyrics of struggle and hope that concept the tracks as an anthem for anyone who knows what it's like to feel pain, but more importantly knows that it will pass. ~~[DOLL HOUSE] DAN FRAZIER~~

ALL IN

NOTHING TO LOSE

Oh, how I love good hardcore. A horrible vocalist or a rhythm section that doesn't know each other will ruin hardcore. A bad, meandering song can ruin hardcore. Following too many old formulas can make hardcore tired. But All In makes none of those mistakes. In fact, they conjure up the power of the mighty Crucified at times. They're extremely heavy, have great drumming, precise and sharp guitar playing, and a solid vocalist that growls, shouts, screams, and even does the occasional talk-over to supreme effect. While they're not ready to step into the shoes of legends just yet, they're a full-tilt blast of fun.
~~[HAND OF HOPE] DOUG VAN PELT~~

12 GAUGE VALENTINE

SHOCK VALUE

Twelve Gauge Valentine reminds me of the first time I entered a bar in the Deep South with my hair down. An unshaven rhino in a dirty wife beater was flippin' a radio dial as I walked over to the jukebox. He wasn't happy with just scowling at me as I peered over the jukebox's selections, and I could tell danger was lurking. I winked at and asked the local Nicotine Queen draped over the bar if she had any requests. "Anything but that dang radio," she replied in a slow drawl that wanted to put extra emphasis on every vowel. For a grin I selected "Where Did Our Love Go" by Diana Ross & The Supremes; and it was if I had already thrown the first punch in a fight, because a brawl broke out. This old guy missed three out of every four punches he threw, but he had a special swing called a "Dive Bomber" that about knocked the fillings out of my teeth every time it landed. I looked out the back door for a quick search of alley dwellers that might come to my aid, but I knew escape was out of the question. I'd have to fight this juggernaut whether I wanted to or not, so I started moving around as fast as my feet would carry me, trying to move around his periphery like a good Allman Brothers bottleneck slide over the frets – smooth and shifty. Each time I struck this titan of a man, though, it was as if each of my punches were like fluffy Hallmark cards arriving on the wrong holiday. I was only making his fury grow. After another bomber connected with my head, I was starting to think I'd be a casket junkie before the night was through. Luckily my friend and former drummer, Billy "Bonzo" Meeks strolled in for the rescue. He'd done some wrestling in his time and once bore the nickname "Bone Crusher" in some amateur matches near the truck stops in Barstow back in the day. He squeezed ole rhino in his bear hug grip until the old fella passed out in his own slobber. Before we could make a hasty retreat, the barroom broke into applause for finally beating some sense into the juggernaut bully. I learned a couple valuable lessons that night: Some people like their music just a certain way; and you don't rock a boat if you're not willing to throw down with the captain. One thing Southern metal (a la Maylene, Showbread, and Danzig) will teach ya is that a left-of-center punch can make as much blood spatter as a 12 Guage Valentine. Get ready for your next fight.
~~[SOLID STATE] KERN COUNTY KID, THE~~

UNWED SAILOR

THE WHITE OX

What makes the art of Johnathon Ford so fascinating is that such utter beauty – the kind of beauty your grandmother or New Age aunt would love – comes from such an earthy character. This guy is a stark raving lunatic onstage with Roadside Monument, for crying out loud. The quality quotient is so high on this release that it's hard to find any fault with it.
~~[BURNT TOAST VINYL] DOUG VAN PELT~~

Ratings

	DV	Writer
Robert Randolph & ... *Colorblind*	04	04
Destroy The Runner *Saints*	03	
Knockout Kings *The Kid's Got Heart*	03	04*
All In *Nothing To Lose*	03*	
12 Gauge Valentine *Shock Value*	03	04
Unwed Sailor *The White Ox*	03	
The Lead *Hardcore For Jesus*	02	
The Blue Letter *Limited-Edition Tour Release*	02*	03
In Reverent Fear *Stomacher*	03*	
Viva Voce *Get Yr Blood Sucked Out*	02*	03*
Jupiter VI *Back From Mars*	03	
Wovenhand *Mosaic*	03*	04

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What **Mastodon** Says

MASTODON IS ONE OF THE BANDS AT THE VERY CREST OF THE NEW WAVE OF AMERICAN HEAVY METAL THAT IS PUMMELING AUDIENCES WORLDWIDE. BESIDES KEEPING IT AS HEAVY AS THEIR NAMESAKE, THIS BAND ACTUALLY MANAGES TO WRITE CONCEPT ALBUMS, TACKLING FIRE, WATER, AND NOW EARTH. IF THAT WEREN'T ODD OR HEAVY ENOUGH THEY ALSO TIP THE HAT TO THE LEGENDARY ELEPHANT MAN (JOSEPH MERRICK). WITH THAT MUCH GOING ON, WE JUST HAD TO INTERVIEW ONE OF METAL'S TOP ACTS. LISTEN IN AS DRUMMER BRANN DAILOR (PICTURED BELOW AT FAR RIGHT) AND EDITOR DOUG VAN PELT DISCUSS IRON MAIDEN, METAL, AND, WELL... MASTODON.

Photo: Ryan Russell

What's the most exciting thing that's happened to you in the last two years?
The last two years? Let's see… I'd have to say opening up for Iron Maiden. In front of 60,000 people in Gothenburg at a stadium. It was pretty exciting.

How is their new album, by the way?
I haven't listened to it yet. Somebody told me it was awesome, but I haven't had a chance to even listen to music. I've only had it for a couple of days, so I haven't had a chance to pop it in and sit down with it.

I didn't mean to interrupt you if you were going to describe some other exciting things.
I went to Peru and I saw Machu Picchu. That was really exciting. That was amazing.

What are your top five to ten metal albums of all time? And why?
Iron Maiden – *Piece of Mind*, because that's the first album I ever bought. At seven years old. It was the first album I bought on my own. I had *Sesame Street Fever* that someone bought me and all those kind of little kids records; but when I turned seven, I stole money out of my mom's purse and walked my (bleep) to the store and bought *Back In Black*, Kiss – *Destroyer*, *Piece of Mind. Piece Of Mind* won, for sure. Judas Priest – *Screaming For Vengeance*. That was around the same time I discovered that. I guess for me that stuff is really embedded in my brain. It has a long history of making me happy. It's like an old faithful friend or something. I can always pop one of those two records in. And Metallica's *Ride The Lightning*. Or Slayer's *Reign In Blood*. You can always pop those in and they'll do it for ya. Or they do it for me every time, pretty much. If I'm sick of my record collection at the time, I can always just say, 'I'll just listen to *Reign In Blood* and it'll be awesome, because it's always awesome!' It always has been awesome, since I was just a little kid. That's four. Sepultura's *Arise*. I love that record. It's amazing. It was pretty brutal when it came out. That's pretty much all I listen to – that and Death – *Human* for the drumming. That was a big influence on me. And the riffs were just really sick. I thought Chuck's riffing style is exactly what I wanted to hear. There was kind of this weird, Middle Eastern feel to it. It kinda sounded evil and Egyptian or something, and that sounded good to me. King Diamond's *Them*. That's just like a perfect record for me. I really, really, *really* was into King Diamond when I was 13. That was all I wanted to listen to: King Diamond, King Diamond, King Diamond. I'd stand in the mirror and lip-sync to it and fake all the guitar solos and switch to the drums – air drumming. I'd just blast it and draw all the album covers and draw King Diamond's face really big on everything. I had a big King Diamond back patch on my jean jacket. I was a hesher back then (laughs). It was really like the story. The concept and everything I thought was really cool. It probably had a great deal to do with the reason why I always really push for a concept for the records that we do. It has a lot to do with King Diamond, I think – my early infatuation with him and his music. *Abigail* and *Them* were the two that really did it for me. And the story was so cool. I could follow along with it and I could visualize everything that was happening. It was creepy and scary and cool. How many's that?

That's between five and ten already.
There ya go! I'm sure there's plenty more… Death's *Spiritual Healing*. Stuff that I got into as a kid. I was a big metalhead when I was a kid. I pretty much went to every single underground thrash… I went straight from Maiden/Priest to Metallica/Slayer and then when I found Slayer, I started digging deeper and trying to find every single thrash band I could find. The Wrath. Gothic Slam. Laaz Rocket.

All these kind of obscure thrash bands. Power Mad. (bleep) like that. Nuclear Assault – *Handle With Care*.

On a related question, growing up as a fan, what were some of your life-changing moments and reasons that made you want to play?
I guess the first time I saw a drumset had a big impact on me. I was probably only three or four years old. And my uncle was practicing. They put headphones on me and I went upstairs in my grandfather's attic, where he was jamming with his band, which my Aunt Sharon sang for the band... I don't know who the bass player was, but my grandfather played guitar and sang as well. My uncle Mark played the drums. They were practicing up in the attic and I would go up there. I really just wanted to play the drums. I just really liked the sound. I was really drawn to them. I was like a magnet. I had to be back there. So, I would go back there and bang on those things. It was kind of a small drum set. It was an 18" kick drum, which was a size that I could reach that and play it. That and my mom's band – we used to go over and see my mom's band play. My mom was in a band with my step-dad. My step-dad was a drummer, so there was always a huge Neil Peart-looking drumkit in our living room. The band would practice and do, like, Rush covers and Judas Priest covers and Black Sabbath and stuff like that. So, it was pretty much obvious to me that I was going to play music. That's always what I wanted to do. From a really young age, there really wasn't much question about it. 'Yeah, I play drums.' I'd be, like, four years old, walking around with my drum sticks.

You were groomed for success, for sure.
It's what I loved doing, and I never stopped doing it, really. I didn't do it all the time. I picked it up and put it back down, the same way any other kid treats any other thing. I wanted to be a drummer one day, and the next day I wanted to be Ninja. So, it was kinda like that. Then, I remember hearing the Mr. Bungle record coming out in '91, that really changed things for me. That put me on a new musical path that led me to an old musical path, I think.

What was the old path?
Well, when I was really little – one and two and three years old, when my father was still…when my mother and father were still together, they were hippies, but they were like Frank Zappa style hippies. So, they would put on Mitch's Brew for me on the headphones or Mozart's *Requiem* or *A Love Supreme* by Coltrane or Yes – *Close to the Edge*, King Crimson's *Red*, *The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway* by Genesis, Stevie Wonder's *Inner Visions*, kinda pumping me full of awesome music. Like a tiny little sponge, I just soaked it up. I got into Mr. Bungle, which led me to Naked City, which led me to John Zorn and all his crazy stuff, like Masada, which led me to Buckethead's *De Laval*, which led me to all that stuff, and all that weird material and practicing all that weird kind of Jazz stuff that got me into William S. Burroughs and that whole scene, which led me back to early John Coltrane and Miles Davis and Jazz and stuff, which got me back into Stevie Wonder and got me back into prog rock in general. So, that's like the early 90s for me, and it's stuck every since. It's my preferred listening ... would be that kind of stuff. The 70s era of music is probably my favorite.

I agree.
My favorite records come from that era. Early David Bowie, early Genesis, all that prog rock stuff. That's where I'm most comfortable listening to that stuff.

Yeah, people talk about metal and my favorite era of metal is 70s metal. Great stuff back then.
Yeah.

Well, let's talk about Blood Mountain.
What do you want to know?

What was different about the writing and recording process of this album compared to Leviathan?
We had a little bit more time, which is cool. And we needed it, because when we started writing, we started realizing that the stuff that we were coming up with was kind of difficult and hard to play as a band. Maybe whoever wrote it could play it, but it was like … for the whole band to be able to get it… We're not going to all play the same thing. There'll be the guitar melody over something else. It just became apparent that this record was obviously going to be way more involved musically. There is so much stuff… there were so many riffs, and we were just piling the (bleep) on. We were just like, 'Wait! Take a step back. We're going to have to push back our recording date by at least a month, because we're going to need at least a month and come in here every single day for hours and hours and hours and sit here and work on this stuff and make sure it's awesome.' Just to where we can get to a point where we're satisfied as four people. We had more time. It was a harder record to make. We demo-ed the material; which, I know a lot of bands do that, but we'd never done that before. We had forever to write *Remission*. We had oodles of time to do that. We had been doing it before we even got signed to Relapse. That's kind of the common saying: 'You have your whole life to write your first record, then you only have, like, two months to write every record after that.' So, because of the nature of the beast, it was like, 'Keep them boys on tour!' We've always been willing to be on tour. We've always been on tour. We're a live band and this is how we (bleep) make our living. And this is how we want to make our living, but as far as creativity, I find it pretty difficult to be creative on tour. It's like… It just doesn't happen. There's so much other stuff going on. You start concentrating on your performance and this and that and the other thing. Everything gets a little cloudy. I don't know that my receptors are all open to the riff gods to infiltrate and bear gifts of riffs. So, we got to demo the songs and live with 'em for a month and sit and listen to 'em and make changes. That was really cool. We hadn't had that opportunity before. That was something totally different. I guess we mixed with someone else. We've never mixed with anybody else. I think that Bayles would've done a great job mixing, but we pretty much wrung him through the wringer recording-wise. I think it was a good idea to hand it off to someone like Rich Costey, just to kind of get his interpretation of what had been recorded. All the sounds in the tracks we thought sounded killer, but if Matt was going to mix it, he would've needed a month off and then start mixing – just for everyone to clear their heads. It's intense making a record – especially one that's… You might not realize it, but there is some pressure for it to be great. Everyone wants it to be great. The four guys in the band want it to be great, but then there's some little give and take and struggles for this and that. You don't want anything to slip through your fingers, so you're trying to pay attention to every little bit that happens on the record. 'Can this be any cooler? Can this be any greater? Can we do anything to this song to make it better?' I feel pretty confident that we got to a point where everybody's happy. We didn't do too much different, but a couple things were different. We definitely stuck with Bayles, and everything was pretty much the same there. We got the drums done in, like, six days. And we started hammering out the guitars and bass and all that stuff. We paid attention to the vocals a bit more. We've been doing that consistently the last couple of records. In mentioning the vocals, I'm not going to say they were an afterthought, but they were not thought of very much. They were kind of random, cadence style yelling to go along with certain parts. And then on *Leviathan* it was like, 'You guys can sing. Why don't we try singing something?' Then it starts like that. On this record, it got even more like that. I'm stoked on that aspect of it – that Brent and Troy are actually singing and it sounds really cool. It sounds really lush and classic rock to me. It doesn't sound homo-erotic.

It almost sounds more slow and simple, but it's not simple. There's definitely fast places. What are your favorite songs on Blood Mountain and why?
I don't know. I really like "Siberian Divide." There's something about the way the song moves that's really cool, I think. I really like "Crystal Skull," "The Wolf Is Loose," "This Mortal Soil," "Sleeping Giant"… I don't know, it's like asking you which kid you like the best. I like 'em all. I think it's a cool piece of art. I think it's different than anything else that's out there. I'm proud of what we came up with as a group. This record was more collaborative from the four of us than any of our prior achievements and I think we achieved the most with it. That's how I feel about the record as a whole.

You did a good job.
Thanks, dude!

Which parts of which songs are the hardest to play? And why?
The big middle section for "Capillarian Crest" is always tough to get through, but it gets easier with time. At the moment right now I don't really feel like it's that hard, it's just that everyone has to pay attention more with that song from the beginning to the end. You have to, like… Other songs started out like that in the past. Like "Megalodon" was always kind of difficult, because there was some really weird, tricky changes in there and that took awhile, but now that one's second nature. I've played it so many (bleep) times, it's like… It's always really fun to play, because it's kind of just a weird song, but hopefully "Capillarian Crest" will get that way after a few more months of touring. It'll be like, 'Hey, whatever, 'Capillarian,' 'digga-digga-digga-digga-digga,' which is really cool, because that's us getting better as musicians. That's hard. "Wolf is Loose" is tricky. You just have to keep it going with that one. You just gotta flow through it and keep it rolling. "Siberian Divide" is hard to play. Another flow song and there's some tricky drum things going on in there a little bit. I feel like I have to pay attention more to keep some of the tempo's down. I'm so used to just going fast and balls out all the time. It's almost harder for me to go slow and keep the tempos down and keep 'em really in the pocket. It's not my first experience with doing that, but there's definitely a lot more of that on this record, so I'm really finding myself somewhat

bridled in a way. Not that that's a bad thing, but it's like… It's different. But that's a skill as a drummer that I need to work on.

One of the first records you bought as a seven year old was Back In Black, so, there you go!
That's in the pocket right there. Yeah, people often come up to me and they're like (imitates low, uneducated "oof" voice), 'Hey, bet you could just rip through some AC/DC or Phil Rudd, hahaha.' I'm like, 'Don't make fun of Phil Rudd. That's not cool. He's a bad (bleep). What if I played for AC/DC? They wouldn't be famous! I would ruin that band.' I think people get the misconception of the fact that we're into progressive stuff and that I'm playing crazy all the time that I would look down on someone for not going crazy? That's insane! Ringo Star did exactly what he was supposed to do for the Beatles. It kinda pisses me off sometimes. Somebody will be like, thinking that they're gonna bond with me on cracking jokes about someone who doesn't play as technical. That's not what it's about at all. It's all about the song. Who cares? Nobody is going to remember the dudes that could play his (bleep) off in a hundred years. They're going to remember the (bleep) song! So, I think that we try to balance that. 'Let's write a kick (bleep) song. Let's challenge ourselves as musicians as well, but let's try to have some stuff that we can sink our teeth into as well that's in there.'

That reminds me of another question that I have written down here: What part of a song do you find yourself gravitating towards when you listen to a song?
I guess it depends on the song. I guess I'm a guitar driven dude. I really like those. The songs in the 80s metal or whatever – Maiden and Priest and Ozzy, like Randy Rhoads. I will have been listening to this record for 25 (bleep) years, and I don't know the words, but I'll sit and sing every single note on the guitar solo and have it completely memorized. I don't know how to explain that, but that's what I remember about the song – the guitar solo. That's weird. Or the guitar melody or something tricky they do – it's still a guitar thing. I like the drums, too. Obviously, I'm a drummer. I guess the guitar really does it for me with that stuff. Other stuff it's the vocals. Other stuff it's the drums. If I'm going to sit down and listen to *Inner Mounting Flame* by Mahavishna Orchestra, I'm going to listen to Billy Cobham play the drums; but if I listen to Ozzy Osbourne – *Blizzard of Oz*, I'm going to listen to Randy Rhoads play some guitar.

John McLaughlin doesn't do a bad job on Inner Mounting Flame, though!
Oh, yeah, totally! John's just all about (bleep). He's sick! (imitates guitar lines: "be-nah-na-na, be-nah-na-nap up up up ta-da-da-dat.")

Yeah, that whole group there was amazing.
Yeah, but if I listen to The Cocteau Twins, I'm going to listen to the singing. So, it depends on the genre as to what's going to strike you.

Yeah, good answer! Well, shifting gears a little bit, what do you think of Jesus Christ?
Jesus Christ?

Yeah.
The words in red. Um, I think he was a super cool dude. Seems like a hesher. (pauses, then laughs) No. As far as all the things that he actually said and if he said 'em, no matter if it's not true that he existed or if it's true that he existed, all the things that he said, if you look into 'em, they're, like, really cool. Like, 'Hey, don't (bleep)…' Basically: 'Be good to one another. Be good to your self.' Everything he says is totally right on. It's totally right on. That is the proper way to live your life and that's the way to treat other people. It's not his fault that idiot… What? Alexander the Great or whatever his name was – the guy that started the Crusades? He thought that he… He couldn't even (bleep) read! He thought that… He was putting crosses on shields, thinking that this guy is the god of war and he had some crazy, like, dream of fire and a cross, telling him to go out and kill. So he turned it into this whole other thing, and that's where it all went wrong. You know? It turned it into, 'Go kill for this man,' you know what I mean? Jesus didn't want that to happen. He had nothing to do with money, power, war, judging people. All the Christians that are out there have it completely ass-backwards. They are completely missing the whole point. I don't know why they even call it Christianity, because it's completely flipped upside-down. (clears throat)

Interesting. What do you think about His claims to be "the Way, the Truth and the Life; no one comes to the Father but by Me?"
Umm. That's a little cocky! (laughs) I don't know. I like his ideals. I like his philosophies on how you treat one another, you know? How you treat your fellow man or whatever.

You guys had some amazing guests on the album, like Josh from Queens of the Stone Age, Scott from Neurosis and Zavala from Mars-Volta. How was it working with those guys in the studio and describe the experience?
Um, we didn't work with them in the studio. They did their tracks through the marvels of modern science and technology. We sent them on files. Those guys are cool. It's just friends, you know what I mean? We just made friends with those guys over the years. And that's all it is, really. It's just like, 'Yo, you want to come sing on the record?' I kind of like that, as long as it's not over-done and as long as everybody knows it's not some kind of ploy to get people to buy your record… Like, if there was some garish sticker on the front of the cd case that was screaming, 'Featuring Josh Homme and Zavala-Bixler…' You know, using their name as like star power or something? I would hate that. That would really bum me out, because: a) I don't want them to feel like they're being used for that purpose, and b) I want to continue being friends with these people; and it's purely out of respect for each other's art that we create as musicians. Recognizing the fact that those people, that we're all like-minded individuals. We're all close friends and we all appreciate and admire each other's music. I really believe that. As far as Queens of the Stone Age, Mars Volta and Neurosis are three of the most real groups or real forms of music that exists right now. It's super heartfelt and really coming from people that are not motivated by money or record sales. They are people that are truly just freaks and that's the only way that they… It's just something that these people need to do… So, I'm super stoked that they agreed to be on the record. I'm stoked that it came out so cool. It's not overbearing. It's not like the dude's singing the whole song or something. It's just like a little spice.

Looking at what people might call "the metal scene" today, what trends are you noticing? And what do you hear that you like and dislike? And why?
Hmmm. I don't know. I like Lamb of God. They're really good. They're my friends. That's probably the best *metal* metal band that's out there. They really… Those guys are taking music far… They're getting the torch from Metallica or Slayer or any of those bands – or Pantera. I think that's where… Because, you know, Pantera's no longer with us. They haven't been around for a long time, but they have legions of fans, you know? And those fans need a concert to go to. And not that Lamb of God sounds just like Pantera. There are some similarities sometimes, but they have their own thing totally and they have their own sound. You can tell a Lamb of God song when you hear it. I think that those fans see in Lamb of God what they saw in Pantera and Metallica and they can go to a Lamb of God show and get that experience. I think that's really cool. That needs to be there, you know what I mean? Other things? I don't know. In a certain sense, metal is having another renaissance, but in other ways I don't think there's that much of it out there that's any good. I don't know. A lot of the kids seem to dig it, but for me, I don't know. It's not my thing. If there's a metal band I listen to, besides the classic metal bands, I think that Slayer made a great record. I haven't heard the Iron Maiden record yet, but hopefully that's awesome. But those are classic metal bands. Those guys will always be where they're at. Okay. Metal schmetal. We're still a metal band, but I feel like we're almost a little bit distancing ourselves with this record, because there's so much more that we're into besides metal that we like to visit and put into our music. Hopefully, that will happen with a lot of music. It'll just kind of get all mixed up. Then we'll start getting weird conglomerates of mushed-together sounds.

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"...no matter if it's not true that he existed or if it's true that he existed, all the things that he said, if you look into 'em, they're, like, really cool..."

Bloodlined

DON'T STEP IN THE BLOO

BY RAND RENFROW

FORGET WHAT YOU KNOW ABOUT HARDCORE. FORGET WHAT YOU KNOW ABOUT HARDCORE THE MUSIC AND HARDCORE THE LIFESTYLE. FORGET THE STEREOTYPES THAT SAY BUYING SHOES, WATCHING BASKETBALL, REBUILDING COMPUTERS, AND HGTV CAN'T BE HARDCORE. IN FACT, FORGET EVEN THE FAR-FLUNG COMMON THOUGHTS, HOWEVER UNSPOKEN THEY MAY BE, THAT THERE IS NO WAY FEMALE VOCALS COULD EVER BE HEAVY AND/OR TOUGH. DROP EVERYTHING, OPEN YOUR MIND, AND SAY HELLO TO BLOODLINED CALLIGRAPHY.

Actually, don't say hello, just welcome them back, because if you don't know who Bloodlined Calligraphy is by now, you are a little behind. Don't worry here is your chance to play a little catch up. I can't tell the story any better than bassist Eric Cargile.

"Here's the Cliff Notes version of BLC: [Matt] Carter and myself started a band when we were in 10th grade. Which was 1996. That band eventually became Bloodlined Calligraphy. The first lineup of the band as Bloodlined Calligraphy was us two, Matt Fleming, Josh Colvin, and Ryan [Hampton]. In the winter of 2001 Ryan left the band to take care of some personal things. We replaced Ryan with Jason Bowden. Then in the summer of 2003 Matt [Fleming] left the band to focus on college. I had met Ally [French] through a message board and I had heard her sing and wasn't that impressed. Then the summer that Matt left, her band came and played the club I booked for. I heard her sing then and I was blown away. So we asked her if she wanted to try and out and she said yes and the rest is history. So then the line up was Carter, Ally, Jason, Josh and myself. This was the lineup that Jason Dunn of Facedown saw and decided he wanted to work with. In the fall of 2003 Josh decided to leave the band for reasons unknown. So we decided to give Ryan a call and to see what he was up to. So we got him back in the band. Then in the winter of 2004 Jason decided to leave the band to focus on his career. So we decided to replace him with Shawn [Williams]. Which brings us to the current lineup of BLC. Ally (vocals), Carter (drums), Eric, Ryan (guitar) and Shawn (guitar)."

If that last part was all new information for you, then you are probably unaware that BLC just released a new album. Entitled *Ypsilanti*, the new album is homage the band's hometown of Ypsilanti, Michigan. Here is Eric to elaborate on the recording process.

"We named the album after our city because we love it. It's just an awesome place to live. If it weren't for people from Ypsilanti and its surrounding areas we wouldn't be here. I don't know what it is but if you meet people our age from Ypsilanti, they all feel the same way about it. [The recording] went awesome. We actually recorded the record at 2 different studios. Ryan, Carter and myself went out to South Dakota and recorded with Mike Dresch at Cathouse Studios. Then we came back home and Ally recorded her vocals at the Tempermill in Detroit with Tony Hamera and Jason Clifton. I'd have to say the best part of recording was just being able to get away and just concentrate on making the best record we could. We had no distractions from home or anything. Those kinds of things have tendency to get in the way during the recording process. My least favorite part was not being able to watch the NBA finals all the way through. But luckily the final game came in crystal clear in our van and Carter and me sat out in the van and watched our Miami Heat take the trophy!"

Now, the members of BLC don't just play shows and make records; they have normal lives with all the trials and tribulations and crazy times like everyone else. Sit back as Eric relates some recent happenings in the BLC camp. Here he is on the inspiration for some songs on the new record:

Calligraphy

"During the writing process for the record Carter's dad was battling lung cancer. So to see him have to go through that was one of the hardest things we as a band have had to go through. Two weeks before we went to record the record he actually passed away. So that loss is a topic of a lot of the songs. But all our songs always have a positive spin on them. So even though the album deals a lot with loss it also is saying the pain won't last forever."

On touring:

"Touring in the past has been good. Kids come out to shows and really show us that they appreciate what we are doing. We can't wait to get back out on the road this year. I'm expecting big things. Lately the craziest thing that has happened to us on the road was when we were driving home from Sonshine Fest in Minnesota. It's a 15 hour drive back to Michigan from there, so obviously it's super late at night. So Ryan and me decide to stop for a bathroom break. So Ryan, Carter and myself get out of our van and get ready to go into this gas station when this guy runs up to our van and says I can't let you guys go in the front door use the side door. So we are like, 'ok whatever.' Then as we are walking in we see pools of what we believe is water. So I almost step in one and this lady standing outside the gas station begins to freak out and scream, 'don't step in the blood.' So I'm like, 'whoa' and I avoid the puddle. Then Ryan asks the lady what's going on and she tells us that literally seconds before we pulled in the paramedics just took away this guy that had just died at the front door of the gas station. So, needless to say we hightailed it outta there. Now that I think about it, that story's not really crazy, just weird."

On touring with a female:

"It was weird at first, not so much because she was a girl, but because we just didn't know each other that well. But after 3 and a half years, it's basically like having a sister. There's nothing I wouldn't do or say around Ally that I wouldn't do or say if it was just guys in the band. The funniest thing about being in a band with a girl is when you get 30 minutes from the venue, you see her start to pull out the make up and hairspray and perfume. It's funny. Our van always smells like strawberries and vanilla and stuff like that."

On BLC's time off:

"I like to play video games and buy shoes. I'm a self-confessed sneaker addict. I have over 30 pairs. It's pretty funny. Carter likes to rebuild computers, Ryan likes to watch HGTV for hours at a time and obsess over the IKEA catalogue. Shawn likes to obsess over guitar gear."

Bloodlined Calligraphy isn't out to redefine the hardcore genre, but needless to say they definitely stand out. Maybe it's the female vocalist, but I'd say it is the quality and brutal sound they bring to the table, while supporting the things they believe in. Stumbling across crime scenes, pride in your hometown, and finding inspiration in tragedy, what could be more hardcore than that?

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IN REVERENT FEAR

BY RAND RENFROW

Making music for a living isn't easy. There are numerous stories of the starving artist, constantly on the road, wondering if there'll be enough money for food and gas to make it to the next gig. For most artists, this is a fact of life, a rite of passage, the dues to be paid. For some bands, there are bigger challenges, the kind that can either tear a band apart, or provide an inspiration for the art to come. In Reverent Fear has walked through difficulties with poise, and it is reflected in their art.

In June of 2002, soon after the high school graduation of most members, the band's singer Jarrod Taylor was diagnosed with cancer. "That kind of hit the band hard, and we were on hiatus for a good while, for the whole time that was going on." Say bassist Jeffrey Tollefson. "We definitely supported Jarrod, as our friend, and wanted to be there for him however we could. Things were pretty much on hold while he was getting treatment, musically speaking." When the band was able to play again, Taylor's bandmates decided to shave their heads for Furnace Fest. Band unity? "Yeah, that was pretty much what it was, with Jarrod having gone through chemo and all. Also due to us all being around 18 and excited about playing again." After such a bump in the road, the band had reason for such excitement, and that sense of unity is seen on *Stomacher*, the band's first full-length in four years.

The song "666777888" is an example of the band's organized chaos. It kicks off in the same raw, throaty screaming vein as Showbread, with a pounding, pulsing drum beat and jagged, distorted guitar riffs that almost make you sick – in a good way. In the end, the song dissolves into a jumbled mess of sounds, and even a trumpet is added to the fray. Others, like "Ride a Black Horse," rely on singing much more than screaming, but have a dark and meandering sense of melody. When asked about the song-writing process for In Reverent Fear's music, Tollefson stresses the importance of unity from diversity.

"We all kind of come to the table with our own melody lines or parts, maybe a beat we like, and build off of that. It ends up being a lot of organic, different pieces coming together. It's a feeling thing. Like when we can find that sort of groovy rock feel, we know it's working. Three of us have been in the band awhile, and then we've had lots of guys cycle in and out, about 11 or 12 members over the years."

Could this kind of turnover rate hurt continuity? "I think it's definitely influenced our sound for the better," says Tollefson. "It makes us continue to grow as musicians. We're breaking in a new drummer right now, so we're having to re-learn songs and challenge ourselves to do things even better, and feed off of each other's style. It keeps it from getting stale."

No strangers to challenges, in music or in life, In Reverent Fear continues on. To hear Tollefson speak, you'd think they wouldn't have it any other way. "(Jarrod's fight with cancer) definitely shaped this band in some ways, but I think we've all benefited. He's in remission now, thankfully. At the time though…we wondered a lot about 'Did God plan for this to happen?' or 'Where is God in all this?' And I can't say it gave us all the answers, but it made us start asking the right questions. I don't think any of us have ever lost hope"

inreverentfear.com

Why suffer?

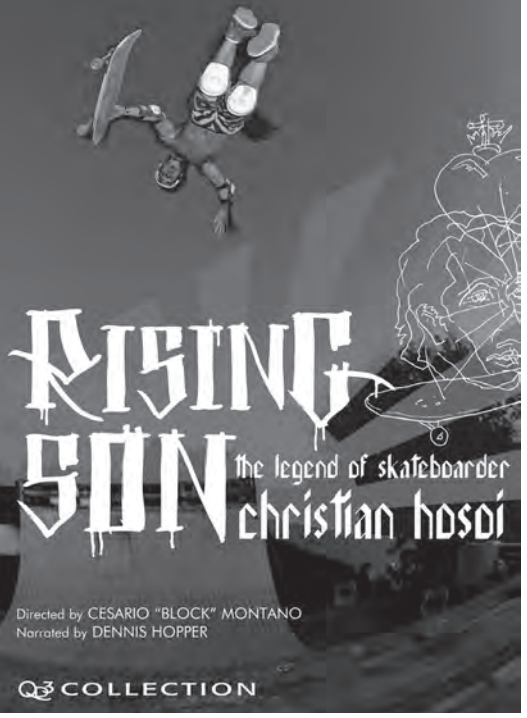

image entertainment

FILL OUT A SURVEY & VOTE FOR YOUR FAVORITE BANDS IN OUR READERS' POLL BALLOT

& WIN PRIZES!

Bob Siemon Designs

WIN A DVD and/or HARD WEAR

HM Readers' survey

30 winners (selected at random) are going to get some of this fine jewelry or one of these hot DVDs. All you have to do is fill out the survey/poll and mail it to us. We've teamed up with Bob Siemon & Image Entertainment, so your entry will be entered into all of the drawings.

We use the collected information to better focus magazine content and advertising. It helps us give you, the reader, more of what you want in HM. None of your personal information will be given or sold to outside interests. Your privacy is protected, because we hate spam, too.

HM Related

1. Have you listened to the HM Podcast? YES NO
   If yes, have you subscribed? YES NO
2. How long have you been reading HM? (*based on years*) 1 2 3 4 5+
3. Besides you, how many other people you know will read this issue of HM? 1 2 3 4 5+
4. How often do you visit hmmag.com? Daily / Every other day / Every week / Rarely / When I hear of a story
5. Would you post at hmforums.com? YES NO
6. Have you purchased something because of an ad you saw in HM? YES NO
7. Have you purchased something because of what you heard in the HM Magazine Podcast? YES NO
8. Do you check out the "Pick of the Litter" indie bands? YES NO

Various interests

9. Which (if any) musical instruments do you play? Guitar / Drums / Keyboards / Bass / Horns / Other
10. Are you in a band? YES NO
    If yes, what type of band? Independent / Unsigned / Worship / Church / Signed
    If yes, how many times do you play shows a month? 1 2-5 5-15 15+
11. Are you in college? YES NO
    If no, do you plan to attend? YES NO
12. Are you considering the armed forces? YES NO
13. Are you a youth pastor or involved with leadership in a youth group? YES NO
14. What percentage of music you buy is purchased from a "Christian" label? 20 40 50 60 80 100%
15. Would you consider going on a short-term missions trip? YES NO
16. Do you give to world relief organizations on a regular basis? YES NO

Shopping information

17. Other than HM, where do you find out about new music? (*circle all that apply*) Spin AP CCM Magnet internet Revolver Relevant Other:_____
18. Which of the following do you read? (*circle all that apply*) Bible study / Biographies / Christian living / Devotions / Fiction / Sci-fi / Sports / Other
19. Where do you buy your CD's? Indie store / Chain store / Internet / Christian store / Other
20. How many songs did you download from the internet in the last month? 0 1-15 16-30 31-45 46+
    For the majority of those songs, you... Paid a fee / Paid nothing
21. Favorite online source for music info? _____
22. HM sampler CD's are great addition? YES NO
23. Do you subscribe to satellite radio? YES NO
    If yes, to this service: SIRIUS XM
24. ***How many... each month?***

	1-2	3-4	5-6	7+
CD's bought				
DVD's bought				
Concerts/shows attended				
Books read				
Video/computer games				
T-shirts bought				
Pants/jeans bought				
Items of body jewelry bought				
Skateboard/BMX accessories				
Movies attended or rented				
Hours online (*a week*)				

HM Reading habits

25. ***Rank HM sections*** 1=NEVER READ 4=ALWAYS READ

	1	2	3	4
Letters to the editor				
Hard news				
Main features				
Album reviews				
DVD reviews				
Book reviews				
Gear & gadget reviews				
Columns				
Back page				

Your information:

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE, ZIP _____

E-MAIL _____

AGE 9-12 13-18 19-23 24-29 30+

SEX MALE FEMALE

AGES OF CHILDREN AT HOME Under 2 2-5 6-11 12-17 None under 18

Place this survey and ballot in an envelope, then mail to: HM 2006 SURVEY POB 367 Hutto TX 78634

Anti-conformity leather bracelets, pewter bracelets, keychains, and cell phone charms courtesy Bob Siemon Designs

Rising Son: The Legend of Skateboarder Christian Hosoi (DVD) courtesy image ENTERTAINMENT

Which genres do you like or dislike?	+	-	?
ALT-PROG *Coheed & Cambria, Mars Volta*			
AMBIENT ROCK *Coldplay, Muse, Eisley, Viva Voce*			
BLACK METAL *Immortal Souls, Extol, Antestor*			
DEATH METAL *Cannibal Corpse, Mortification*			
EMO *Jimmy Eat World, Dashboard Confessional*			
GARAGE ROCK *White Stripes, The Hives*			
GRASSROOTS *Dave Matthews Band, Caedmon's Call*			
HAIR METAL *Winger, Poison, Stryper*			
HARDCORE *Hatebreed, Figure Four, Comeback Kid*			
HARD ROCK *Guns'n'Roses, Led Zeppelin, Bride*			
INDIE-ROCK *Weezer, David Bazan, Anathallo*			
INDUSTRIAL *Nine Inch Nails, Marilyn Manson*			
METALCORE *Norma Jean, The Bled*			
NU-METAL *East West, Godsmack, Disturbed*			
POP-PUNK *MxPx, Green Day, Good Charlotte*			
PROG-ROCK *Neal Morse, Rush, Glass Hammer*			
PUNK *The Deal, Rancid*			
RADIO MODERN ROCK *Staind, Kutless, Nickelback*			
RAP-ROCK *Limp Bizkit, P.O.D.*			
RETRO-ROCK *Showbread, the Huntingtons*			
SCREAMO *Thursday, AFI, Underoath*			
SHOE-GAZER *Starflyer 59, My Bloody Valentine*			
WORSHIP ROCK *Delirious?, David Crowder Band*			

READERS' POLL – ***Vote for your 2006 favorites...***

BAND _____

ALBUM _____

ALBUM COVER _____

SONG _____

_____

SINGER _____

LYRICIST _____

GUITARIST _____

BASSIST _____

DRUMMER _____

_____

LIVE SHOW _____

NEW BAND _____

UNSIGNED BAND _____

HM ARTICLE _____

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Sales Through Dealers, etc and Other Non-USPS Paid Distribution	6,826	6,677
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MORTIFICATION

BY DOUG VAN PELT

Mortification have re-tooled and released an album, *Erasing The Goblin*, that should easily rank somewhere in the upper echelons of their crowded catalog (18 albums ain't bad for any band). Chief to the sound of *Erasing* is the addition and seasoning of its new players. While founder Steve Rowe surely considered changing the name of the band a few times over the years, he has kept the name consistent. Members of the "If they change members they should change names" club should listen to any of the band's 18 discs and try to argue that any one of them sounds like a different band.

Who are the new guys in the band and how did they come to join?
Steve: Mick Jelonic (guitar) has been with me four years, since the recording of *Relentless*. I had known Mick for years from a distance as he was in mainstream bands in the 80's & 90's. He lives in the countryside, so we never crossed paths much, but I was familiar with his skill on the guitar. Damien played with Mick in the early 90's & they remained friends. Damien came into the band about a year ago, when Mike exited the band last June.

What sort of attitudes and sounds did you guys want to bring to Mortification? Why?
Mick: I wanted to bring some new style brutality to the group. Just some good old intense metal guitar riffs & solos.

Damien: Nothing preconceived. I just wanted Mort to sound its best and to complement the writing style of the guys.

What do the new guys bring into the band?
Steve: Mick is a world class lead & rhythm guitar player. I have always wanted someone in the band who can play anything from Malmsteen to Marty Friedman to Satriani to Metallica to Bolt Thrower. Hard to find someone like this. He is an amazing person, player and friend. He also produced & engineered *Erasing The Goblin*, so he brings multi skills to the band, also playing a big role in song writing. Damien is a solid, well rehearsed drummer, very proficient in playing along the lines of Scott Travis (Judas Priest, Fight). Playing fast is a new challenge for him, but he is a dedicated person. I like his skip triplet foot work. Check "Escape the Blasphemous Tabernacle." I love those running power metal rhythms and Damien just makes the band soar in this element. Damien wrote one song on *Erasing*, called "Short Circuit." Reminded me of Lightforce alot & I really wanted to put a song on this album that had old school Punk vocals. "Short Circuit" suited such a vocal approach perfectly.

What is getting you excited or keeping you excited about metal music these days?
Steve: The Christian Metal scene is building strongly once again. Established acts like Narnia, Rob Rock & Veni Domine are taking Christian Metal to a world class level & we are aiming to do the same in a more Extreme Metal realm. Underground bands like Exousia are doing a great work in an even more extreme realm. Jayson Sherlock has rejoined Paramaecium, so their next album will be a Ripper!

Some people seem hung up on the amazing *Scrolls* album – even after several really good albums that have continually evolved. How does that mindset/thought grab you?
Steve: I am 80's metal through and through. Whether it be death metal, power metal, thrash or even punk. I like 80's extreme metal. That was the aim with *Erasing*. I accept that *Scrolls* was a classic album and a defining point. However, I do not ever wish to redo anything I have done before. I love the challenge of reinvention. Working with different people has been a positive in many ways, because it is a chance to work with different strengths in people's playing & song interpretation. I personally think *The Silver Cord is Severed* is as much a great Mort album as was *Scolls*, *Post Momentary* and *EnVision*. All for different reasons. For pure in-the-trenches hard work, *Erasing* is the most satisfying outcome ever. It proves that a group can do it all without assistance & really create the album that is heard in the head.

What's going on with the band touring-wise?
We will tour Central, Latin & South America in November. This weekend we launch *Erasing* here in Melbourne Australia followed by 2 shows in Perth, Western Australia next month.

What are your hopes, dreams, and goals for Mortification?
Mick: To reach as many people as possible with great music and a great message.

Damien: Simply that Mortification continues long into the future.

rowetproductions.com

Steve owns every Iron Maiden album

WAR OF AGES

BY TIMOTHY GERST

Back again is the high-flying, hardcore band, War of Ages, and this time they are bringing all they have. Following the surprisingly successful release of the debut self-titled album on Strikefirst Records, the band released its sophomore album, *Pride of the Wicked*, on September 5th.

The band, which hails from hardcore central, Erie, PN, is no doubt nothing less than hardcore on this album. Bringing together hard rock and metal sounds, along with powerful lyrics the band is able to create a melodic metal sound that will entice any hardcore fan. Similar to the last album, the band hopes to attract many new fans with the personal music that they write about.

The new album has a cover, which depicts a man by himself with a sword attacking several smaller enemies with swords. Immediately, anyone would think good vs. evil, but as guitarist Leroy Hamp explains, "We wanted people to think good vs. evil, but in reality it's not about good vs. evil." As you continue to look through the book you see that the "good" guy dies in the battle, and after listening to the music on the album and looking at the title of the album, you notice that the album cover is not a depiction of good vs. evil, but rather a metaphor for what happens when someone gets too prideful and lets that pride get in the way of their lives, friends, and everything around them. "That's the theme of this album; not to let pride get into our lives," explains Hamp.

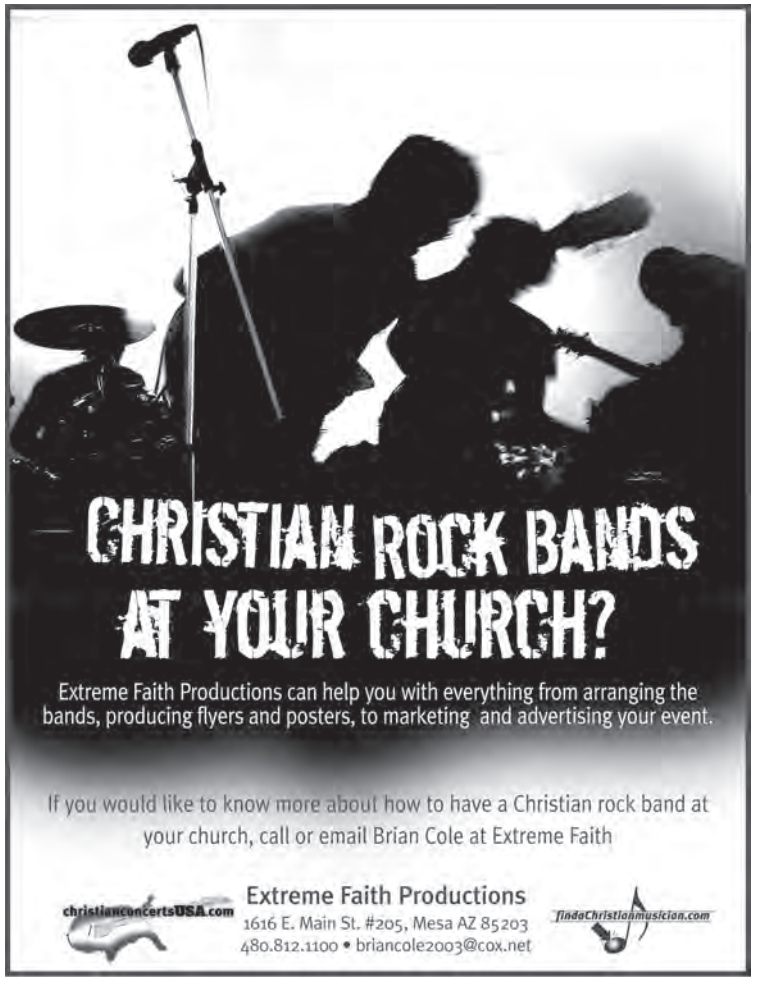
Looking back, we see that the band has been able to grow to their current level of achievement by maintaining a busy playing schedule. Last year the band played over 250 shows, with some of the best known names in hardcore Christian music. The support from fans is obvious as the band sold over 3,000 copies of the self-titled debut at shows alone, had over 150,000 Myspace plays, and over 90,000 Purevolume plays.

The new album has extremely powerful lyrics. Hamp writes the majority of lyrics and says that all of his lyrics that he writes are based on real life experiences and that he wants to get a message out there that people can connect with. This new album is nothing short of that, as song after song allows the listener to connect with the overall theme of how dangerous pride can be.

As for the future of War of Ages, the band will continue to tour and keep a busy schedule. Also, the band hopes to promote this CD on their upcoming tour and continue to grow as a band and maintain a larger fan base. Then, in the next year or two, fans can look for another album to come out, which will rock just as much or even more than the past two. Check out War of Ages in a city near you!

myspace.com/warofages

The danger of pride



CHRISTIAN ROCK BANDS AT YOUR CHURCH?

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If you would like to know more about how to have a Christian rock band at your church, call or email Brian Cole at Extreme Faith

christianconcertsUSA.com

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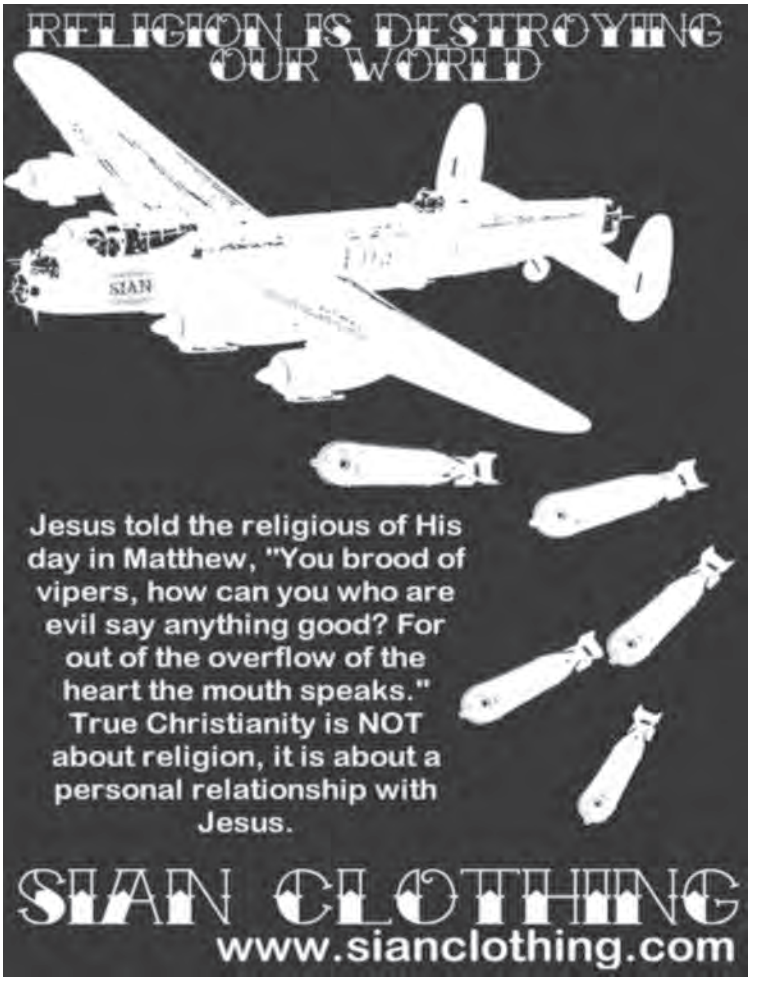
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New Releases

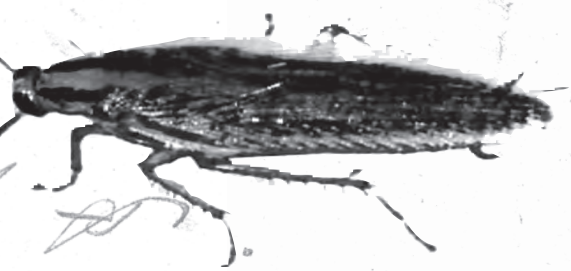
Emotion (S/T & *Tip To Toe* EP, both remastered on Retroactive)
Angelo LaTona – *Unveiled* (instrumental guitar, angelolatona.com)
Awake – *Spiritual Warfare* (mjcrecords.com)
Meyvn – *Splintered Skies* (meyvn.net)
Zion – *Thrillseeker: A Live History* (Retroactive)
The Seventh Power – S/T (featuring R. Sweet on drums, Retroactive)
Jeff Urso – *Straight Ahead* (guitar instrumental, jeffurso.com)
Delorean – *Dauntless* (deloreanrocks.com)
T. Moody – *Acoustic Groove...* (guitar instrumental, tmoody.com)
Angel 7 – *Black And White* (Bombworks)
7 Days – *The Weight Of The World* (Rivel)
Century Sleeper – *Awaken* (Bombworks)
Deuteronomium – *Street Corner Queen* (maanalainenlevykauppa.com)
Sevensystem – *Hope Arises* (Crosswalk)
Autumn Black – *Beneath The Shadows* (autumnblackmusic.com)
Synnove – S/T (Soundmass)
Lo-Ruhamah – S/T (Bombworks)

Metal tracks

• The latest issue (Oct/Nov) of Heaven's Metal Fanzine featured a rare color cover, featuring the band **Stryken**, who just released their *First Strike* CD (for the first time ever) on Girder Music. [For more information on this issue, visit hmmag.com/heavensmetal]
• Check out the lineup for Nordic Fest:
Extol (Norway ... always a treat)
Horde (Australia ... an extremely rare treat)
Showdown (Norway, not the band from Tennessee...)
Evergrace (Sweden)
Paramæcium (Australia ... featuring you-know-who on drums)
Laudamus (Sweden)
Pantokrator (Sweden)
Barricades (Denmark)
and more bands to be announced later!
[11/2 - 11/5 at Subscene, Oslo. nordicfest.no]
• Classic CD Books has struck a deal with the authors of the **Stryper** biography, *Loud N' Clear*, to release two audio versions: a 6-CD project will be released in October; and it will also be released on MP3.
• The **Angel 7** album, *Black And White*, is sung in Russian.
• The Houston, TX band **Warrior**, [iamawarrior.com] are alive and well, despite an erroneous report in Heaven's Metal Fanzine #64 that they were looking for multiple band members.
• **Iona** has a new album, *The Circling Hour*, available online [iona.uk.com]
• **Liberty N' Justice** is back in the studio recording the follow-up to *Soundtrack Of A Soul*. The album is going to be a full-production acoustic rock record entitled *Independence Day*. It will feature 12 "all-star singers" on 11 songs.
• **Tom Denlinger** (former Sardonyx vocalist) and friends are playing rock worship these days as **Lightshine Worship Band**.
• The entire **Bloodgood** catalog is now on itunes.
• **Bride** has signed to Retroactive Records for the release of their new album, *Skin For Skin*.
• Former **Stryken** drummer **Joey Puente** is soon to announce a melodic metal solo album he's working on.
• **Phil Keaggy** has performed some concerts with his old band, **Glass Harp**. A live DVD has been recorded.

Classic Moments in Christian Rock history

BY DOUG VAN PELT



[Houston, TX]. In 1989 Vengeance Rising played an outdoor free concert in the notorious "Montrose District" of Houston, Texas, near the intersection of Montrose and Westheimer. During this performance in the hot Texas heat, these Californian musicians were introduced to the rather large Texas-size flying "Tree Roaches" that inhabit the region. While the band was used to the ocassional guitar string knots in their hair from their furious windmilling action, they were certainly shocked by these giant beetles getting tangled in their hair. During one song section, rhythm guitarist Doug Thieme's on-stage volume skyrocketed. Lead player Larry Farkas looked back at Thieme's amplifier heads and noticed one of these giant bugs scuttling across the knobs. Apparently the weight of the creature was enough to turn the volume up!

Once Dead is working on a comback album. Visit oncedeadband.biz

HARDNEWS
*Page fourteen**

Enough Already!

BY JAMIE LEE RAKE

Is **LIQUID** the coolest guy in Christian (market) music? Even were he to be in the general market, the man born Victor Oquendo might be a radio formatter's most pleasant nightmare. His Gotee Records debut, *Tales From The Badlands*, could be pigeonholed as "Latin rock," but what little justice that would do! Liq' mixes rhythmic and rocking influences in ministerial outreach and personal recollection to recall a less rapping, male hispanic Lauryn Hill. This is on a Christian label, right? Nigh incredibly, yup.

I first heard Liquid and more diverse music on **GEORGE LUKE**'s essential weekly radio show **WORLD BEAT**. Luke makes a travelogue of music by believers the globe over on United Christian Broadcasting (UCB.co.uk) most every Saturday at 3 PM Central Time. From Native American and East Indian sounds to reggae and the Latin tropical tuneage Luke admires, it's always an insightful journey into our kin in Christ's musical diversity. If there's a comparable show on U.S. Christian radio, I want to know (but ain't holding my breath).

Tongan reggae brother duo **IMISI** don't bring much particularly Polynesian on their second longplayer, *Forward* (Lion Of Zion), but it still merits spins in my Bose unit. Dub, harmonica-sweetened blues, turntablism and the honeyed harmonizing of David and Jubilee Fohe contribute to rootsy songs high on evangelistic urgency and doctrinal soundness. Add a couple of recastings of their work in Spanish and Portugese, and Imisi are all the more deliciously multi-culti.

MALACO RECORDS could more effectively exploit its rich soul gospel back catalogue. Its *Original Gospel Classics* series steps in the right direction. Ten-song collections by Albertina Walker, The Jackson Southernaires, Rev. Clay Evans and late, controversial, choral groundbreaker Rev. James Cleveland come with that rare Malaco amenity: liner notes. Greater discographical detail here and, yes, full re-issues of albums from which these compilations were culled would be welcome, but at least these are tastes of the heritage label in modern African-American sacred music. (Malaco.com)

THE BYRDS' historical importance to you, godly rocking reader, should be a no-brainer: prime instigators of American folk rock... and country rock; taking Pete Seeger's paraphrase of Ecclesiastes 3 – "Turn! Turn! Turn!" to #1; introducing pop listeners to Bob Dylan's work; remade "Jesus Is Just Alright" before The Doobie Brothers; and Byrds Roger McGuinn's and Chris Hillman's Christian conversions. And loads of music that has aged gracefully, as proven on *There Is A Season* (Columbia/Legacy). The 4-CD/1-DVD box follows a sometimes bumpy, always sonorous and rarely profane trek through the career of one of the cornerstones of multiple alt' rock permutations, regardless of their spiritual affiliation.

Feel free to send EXCEPTIONAL music by my/our brethren and sistren in the Most High to: P.O. Box 29, Waupun, WI 53963-0029 U.S.A. for review and storage in the expansive Rake Archives. Until next time, don't make your guardian angel work overtime!

News bullets

Southern California's **xDeathstarx** kicked off a full US tour. The band's Facedown debut, *We Are The Threat* will be released in January of 2007.

For the second year in a row, **Flee the Seen** has nabbed two top honors in the Pitch Music Awards held in Kansas City, MO. The band walked away winners from the 2006 "will of the people" ballot-cast with awards for "Best Female Vocalist" and "Best Punk Band." Flee The Seen were on the *Y'all Got Weapons Tour* all of September with **Chasing Victory** and **Sullivan**.

Haste the Day finally got back on the road, on a tour with Scary Kids Scaring Kids, **August Burns Red**, **Destroy The Runner**, and Ligeia.

Ronnie Martin reports that the long awaited collaboration project between he and brother **Jason** from **Starflyer 59** is now completed.

The Fold helped out their tourmates **mewithoutYou** recently when their bio-diesel bus broke down. They all shared the Fold's vehicle for a week in Canada. The Fold will soon tour with **Cool Hand Luke** and Self Against City before heading into the studio for their second T&N album.

Oops! In the last issue of HM (#121) we gave the wrong link to the free **Dogwood** track available as part of their *Summer Slam* compilation. [indievisionmusic.com]

Namur's *Songs From The Valley Of Baca* album is their last. Former vocalist/band leader **David Åhlén** has a new project, called **Father of Levi**.

Guitar virtuoso **Phil Keaggy** has thrown his hat into the podcasting ring, offering monthly insight into his craft, with interviews, samples of music, and a few personal picks. [philkeaggy.com]

Ty Tabor

After 11 studio albums with King's X and over 5 solo / side projects, this musician is anything but lazy. His newly released *Rock Garden* solo album (Inside Out) is easily this Beatlesque balladeer's most rocking and happiest sounding solo outing to date.

Why shed the tender moments for the brash rocking ones?

"Shed the tender moments for the brash rocking ones?" That's awesome. I think that it's because that's also a part of my life. It's actually a bigger part of my life – I do play loud rock and roll guitar in the large majority of things that I'm involved in. Platypus and Jelly Jam and things like that have been a lot more heavy guitar-wise than my solo stuff. I think that originally when I was doing solo stuff, it was just that there was no other venue to do that kind of music unless I did it on a solo record. So, the other things I was involved in just were a different kind of thing. For me, it's just a matter of where I'm at. Any time that I do a record it reflects where I'm at. The truth is: the majority of the time I just want to play rock and roll. That's what I always grew up doing. That's what I do in King's X. That is what I'm about. Loud guitars – that's what I love. I've always kinda held back on that stuff on solo stuff out of being timid or thinking, 'I don't have a voice that can back up that kind of music,' or whatever reason. I've always kinda been afraid to let loose the way I wanted to. Thanks to Jelly Jam and doing some projects like that, which forced me to have to sing on top of music that I thought was not possible for me to sing on top of... It just forced me to realize, 'Maybe I can make the record I've always wanted to do.' It seems like the most true thing to who I really am, as far as solo stuff.

When I did this record, it's the record I wanted to do. It happens to be the place I'm at is more positive than it was last time I did a record. There is a difference. I was being more in touch with who I really am as a kid growing up when I did this record. I made the record I always wanted to make. That is at my core of who I am – 70s rock guitar. That's my era. That's even what I do in King's X. It's very 70s. I just wanted to make a rock record. I've just always been afraid to sing vocals on something that rocks hard, because I have just never felt the confidence about my voice. That was always the thing holding me back. I finally just said, 'You know, it doesn't matter. It's what's true to me. It's what I really want to do, and it's what I need to do.'

What are your favorite songs here and why?

It kind of depends on the day. It depends on my mood. I'll gravitate towards different songs that represent how it is I'm feeling at that moment or want to hear. It depends. I would say in general, I like the song "Afraid." I like the song "Ride." I like "Beautiful Sky." I like the song called "Play." I like "Stalker." I tried to be happy with everything on the record. That's why it's tough to narrow it down to a favorite song. I tried to make every song on the record be at a level of, 'I'm going to enjoy this if this is going to be on my record, or it's not gonna be on the record.' It took me years to be sure of that for myself. I'm happy with it from beginning to end.

WWE's Pay-Per-View *Unforgiven* event is using the **Day of Fire** song "Run" for the program's theme song. "We hope to be a part of many future WWE events," states **Josh Brown**. "For me personally, this is really cool, because I grew up watching Jerry 'The King' Lawler wrestle in Memphis, Tenn. Now he is the voice of *Monday Night Raw* on the USA Network and it is truly an honor to have him introduce our song 'Run' as the official theme song of WWE's *Unforgiven 2006*."

Stellar Kart are supporting the Activate product line. Frontman **Adam Agee** couldn't stop gushing about it. "We've been soaking up the Activate line since the beginning, and we can't tell you how washed and revitalized we all feel."

Escape From Earth's song, "Without," is going to be featured in the TV trailer for the upcoming Touchstone Picture, *The Guardian* (starring Ashton Kutcher and Kevin Kostner).

Superchick is headlining the *Live Love Tour* this fall with **Sanctus Real**, **John Reuben**, and **Last Tuesday**. Superchick is performing two songs for the Cartoon Network. Their song, "It's On," is slated to appear in the ABC movie, *Relative Chaos*, as well as the Tim Allen film, *Zoom*. The song "We Live" is set to appear in ABC promos for the new fall series, *Brothers And Sisters*.

We are sad to report that **Tim Cooper**, bassist with **Ashen Mortality**, died on August 17. "He had been battling leukemia for the past 2 years," reports friend and Ashen Mortality guitarist **Ian Arkley**. "He had 2 young children, and was married to **Julie**. He will be greatly missed by all who knew him."

In more sad news, **Eowyn** guitarist **Matt Hallmark** died in a car accident while driving home to Alabama from his last show with the band.

Comeback Kid are touring with hardcore legends Gorilla Biscuits.

HARDNEWS
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Today Forever

BY ARIEL PEASE

With their release of *The New Pathetic* on Facedown Records, Today Forever from Kassel, Germany will transition from European metal band to international megastars. This album easily puts Today Forever in a class with countless bands on summer tours like Ozzfest or the Vans Warped Tour.

Picture this: a small, dark, smoke-filled club packed with loads of hardcore fans from all different backgrounds dancing to the music of one band. Just a typical show for Today Forever. Lead vocalist, Christian, describes the scene as "…lots of intelligent, cosmopolitan kids and very little violence at the shows."

Together since 2001, with the exception of a few members, Today Forever members joined from numerous other bands in the scene, and one tattoo studio owner. Christian claims this is "…the usual thing: you know each other [from being in the same scene] and then you start making music together."

With their CD released in Europe over a year ago, Today Forever has created quite a stir overseas, playing shows every weekend and doing 4-5 day mini tours. Previous tour mates include Comeback Kid, Stretch Arm Strong, Walls of Jericho, Silverstein, A Love for Enemies, Modern Life is War, among others.

Playing shows with both Christian and non-Christian bands has not been an issue for Today Forever. Heavy metal knows no religion. With no "Christian hardcore" scene in Germany, the band does not view their audience as Christian or not. "You can only see a person's face, you can't see into their heart. What do I know about their faith?" The message, lyrically and musically, is to inspire people. "If someone begins to believe the Gospel through our music, I think that is the greatest thing that could happen," says Christian, "but I can't make that happen."

Keeping their songs "short, but full of change and surprises…preserves the tension" of the music. The lyrics are poetic accounts of personal experiences. Though sometimes exaggerated and hypothetical, he wants to stress that "it's about the message and not the explicit words. I think people can feel what the meaning is."

"It's hard to fit us into one category…Mid-90's New School is simply not far enough, and Screamo is way too far." The hardcore/ heavy metal scene, while vast, has produced numerous bands that sound alike. Today Forever, with their short, poignant songs "full of changes and surprises" stands out as their own brand of metal.

News bullets

Bloodlined Calligraphy's **Ally French** is competing with Morrissey, NOFX, and Rise Against in a contest at Peta2.com to determine which one they'll name one of their conference rooms after. Bloodlined Calligraphy will be hitting the road with Caliban and The Acacia Strain.

The "King of Rock and Soul," **Solomon Burke** has a new album, *Unmissable*, out September 26 on Shout! Factory. Fans in Nashville will be able to hear the new material the night before the release with a show at Belcourt Theater with **Buddy Miller**, who also produced Burke's new album. The performance will be filmed and is sure to include some very special guests, like Emmylou Harris and Patty Griffin. The concert will air on HD Net in early 2007.

The **Anberlin** and **Copeland** frontmen, **Stephen Christian** and **Aaron Marsh** are working on a project together, called **Anchor & Braille**. "Aaron and myself are still going to be doing our perspective bands," explains Christian, "but we will work on writing/recording when both of us are off tour. The next Anberlin album will be out mid-February and I promise it will be the best one yet." For a peek at this new project, go to anchorandbraille.com and listen to "A Sleep."

Critical will be headlining the famous Whisky A Go Go in Hollywood to promote the release of their debut album, *The Quiet Hour*.

Emery and YouTube.com are having a "Make Your Own Video" contest, where you have the chance to create and post your own music video for Emery's song, "So Cold I Could See My Breath." Two winners will receive a 42" Plasma TV courtesy of X2Gen!

Widows & Orphans have a new album coming out in November on Doll House Recordings.

War of Ages will be on tour with **Demise of Eros** and **12 Gauge Valentine** this fall.

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Letters to the Edit

HE IS LEGENDARY

You guys should cover He Is Legend's new CD in the next issue. That'd be pretty sweet, and I know lots of other people would like to see it covered, too. God bless you guys.
–Sam Moore, via internet

Ed – Your wish is our command. How do you think Andrew Schwab did on the article?

HE IS WHAT?

I have written to you several times in the past asking for your advice and I greatly appreciate the godly wisdom in your answers. I am the young adult's pastor at Ridgeview Baptist Church in North Augusta, SC, and am an adamant fan of CHRISTIAN rock, hardcore, death, you name it. I guess what I would like you to reply to is the fact that I feel like labels such as Solid State are playing a large part in deceiving Christians who would walk into a local CHRISTIAN bookstore and pick up bands under a supposed CHRISTIAN label such as He Is Legend and formerly of the label, The Agony Scene. I feel like this is just a horrible thing to be doing and is very frustrating to someone like me who will listen to a couple of songs from the "in store" sampler and fall in love with the sound, only to buy the cd and investigate further, finding no mention of Jesus or anything that even remotely promotes Christianity. I also recently went to a web page where the members of He Is Legend are smoking and wearing shirts from Satanic bands with all types of satanic imagery on them...I might sound like I'm harping, but I feel like these people have a huge role in other's lives and could be creating a stumbling block. I know that you probably don't want to say anything about these bands in a negative way, but I would really feel that it would be a great asset to have someone like yourself who speaks to "secular" bands about Christ in your interviews with "what so & so sez" to maybe look at asking "Christian" bands what they say? I think alot of people might be wondering. God bless you and the ministry that you have. I look forward to hearing from you. Also, if there is anything that you would like me to do for HM, I would like for you to tell me. I always keep you and your staff in our prayers.
–Jason, via internet

Ed – Hmm... With the changing of times comes the awareness that some art created within the body of Christ isn't so "obvious" or perhaps even troubling in some way. For those who want to discover the music that is "safe" for Christians, the task has become harder, that's for sure. Perhaps magazine interviews can reveal much of what lies in the hearts of an artist, as Matthew 12:34 implies? Hopefully, HM Magazine can continue to speak to the diverse tastes of those that find themselves listening to faith-inspired music.

THAT CD ISN'T LEGENDARY

I friggin love this magazine. It's everything I've ever wanted. Thank you so much. Well, now that I've got that off my chest, I have to tell you, I've listened to the last 3 CD's I've received from you guys, and honestly, there is not a song I like on them. There are some that get close, but really, I've heard plenty of amazing underground Christian bands, and I think they deserve some recognition. How would a band go about giving you some music to consider putting on those CD's? Also, I have been hearing strange things about He Is Legend these days, could you guys try to do a peice on them to set the record straight, whichever way it goes?
–Brandon Ferguson, via internet

Ed – Thanks for your honesty. The samplers these days are provided by one label (Retroactive), and thus might not appeal to everyone's tastes. I'm guessing that people would rather have them than nothing? For info on getting on the sampler, contact the label.

WRESTLING? WHO WATCHES IT?

Just finished *Body Piercing Saved My Life*. Excellent job on your contributions to the book. I'm an avid fan of the WWE (yes, my one vice), and with each pay-per-view event they hold every month, there is always a theme song. The theme song for this month's pay per view event, *Unforgiven*, is by a Christian band. This month, the theme is "Run" by Day of Fire.
–Brian Lang, Wilmington, IL

Ed – Check out the Sting story on page 22.

HM

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SCRIPTURE "And who knows but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this?" (Esther 4:14)

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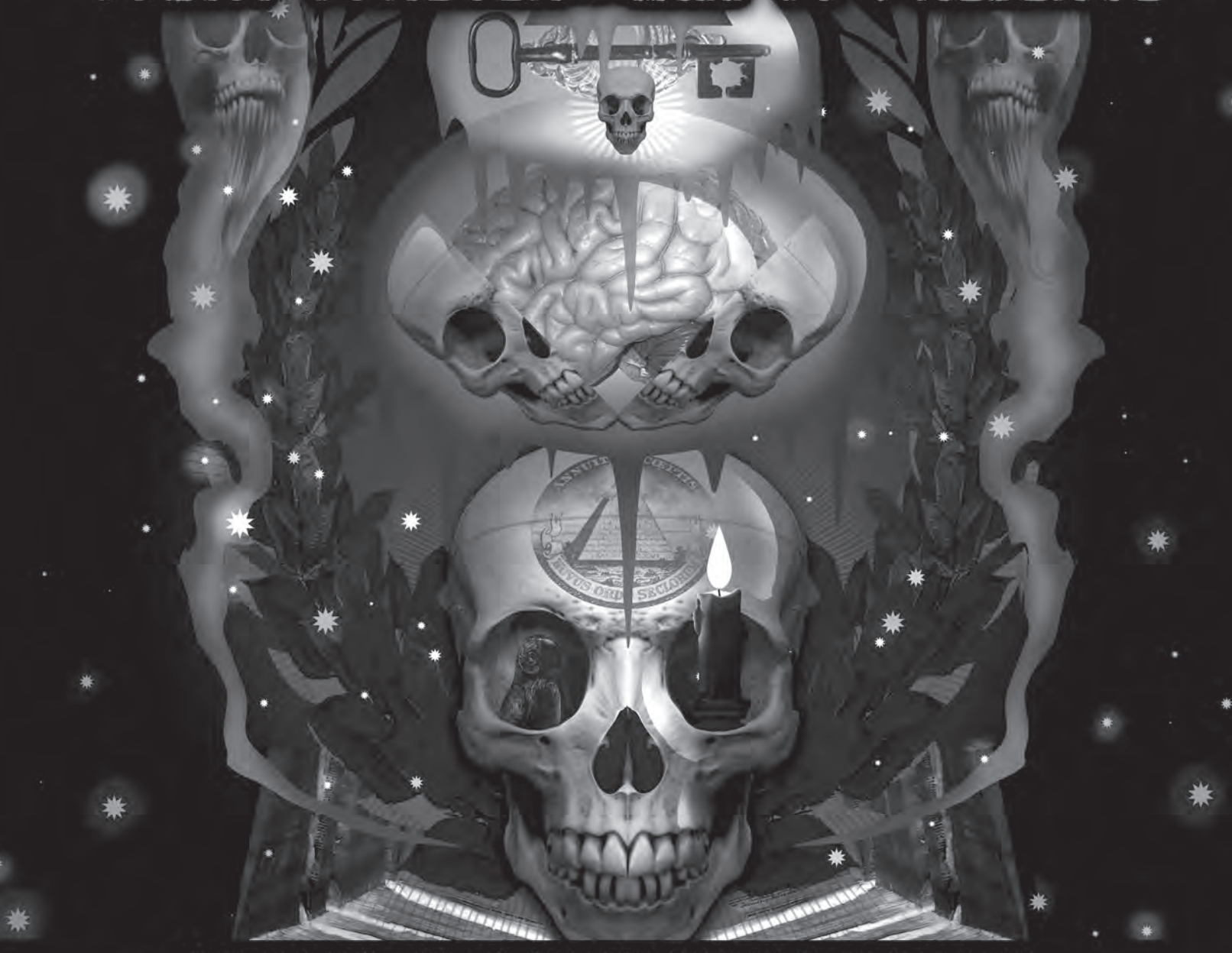

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From the editor

Doug Van Pelt

FLIP OUT

Welcome to our first ever "flip cover" issue of HM. I hope it's not too confusing for ya! He he. It was fun to design. I took our regular features and just split them between the two halves. You might notice that the page numbers start over again, but this side of the magazine has a little asterisk (*) to the right of the number to set it apart from the identical number in the other half. I decided to go with this dual cover because it was too hard to choose between the two (Pillar and Skillet).

After I'd already decided, I polled our e-newsletter database (there's 9,600+ people who get this thing on a weekly basis...if you'd like to sign up for that, just do so at our main page at hmmag.com). They voted this way: 71 votes for Skillet; 60 for Pillar; and 17 for neither.

In lieu of our "spinning at HM" feature, I've decided to report the following random facts about this issue's production cycle:
Number of times during this deadline I viewed the "New Numa" video: 1
Number of times I've tossed a CD as far as I can throw it outside: 12
Number of Cokes spilled on the desk: 1
Number of 23.5 fl. oz. cans of Jolt Blue energy drinks consumed: 8
Number of times I've "run the ranch" to clear my head: 13
Number of lunches with former managing editors: 1
Number of flat tires: 2
Number of Donald Miller books read: 2
Number of *Prison Break* episodes watched: 27
Number of contacts from publicist, asking if we'd rec'd Iron Maiden CD: 4
Number of times I specifically mentioned Christ to a stranger: 1
Number of podcast interviews I did: 3
Number of "phoner" interviews I did: 3
Number of on-camera interviews I did: 1
Number of email interviews I did: 3
Number of other editorial members flown to Illinois for band interview: 1
Number of televised football games watched: 9
Number of football movies watched in theater: 1

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